

Bhutto wants foe sacked

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto called for the dismissal of Sind Province Chief Minister Jam Sadiq Ali after he admitted drinking alcohol in violation of the country's Islamic laws. Other opposition deputies said during a brief debate in the National Assembly Tuesday that Ali, a bitter opponent of Bhutto, should be sacked in accordance with the same laws. Newspapers Tuesday quoted Ali as saying he drank and did not care about the law. Bhutto, sacked as prime minister last August by President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, called Ali's remarks highly objectionable. She said she would have fired any of her ministers who made such a statement. Bhutto last week accused Ali, once one of her closest aides, of being routinely "out of his senses" after dusk because of drinking. She said this was one reason she did not appoint him to his present office during her 20-month government. "I drink, but remain in my senses all the time," Ali told the newspapers. One quoted him as saying: "I don't care a fig for any law. Allah is merciful and he would have mercy on me. I have a lot of pressure of work."

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية، الراي

Gulf costs hit British economy

LONDON (AP) — Britain's top treasury official said Tuesday that the cost of keeping troops in the Gulf may affect government both revenues and spending this year. Norman Lamont, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, said in an interview on BBC radio that the supplementary estimate of the cost of the Gulf operation so far was £480 million (\$920 million). "But beyond that the costs must be highly uncertain and it is very unclear how long a war will last," he said. "Clearly a war could affect both tax revenues and public expenditure, but precisely what the effect would be would depend very much how long a war went on." He said the government was spending more than planned in the current budget year. "To a very large extent because of the Gulf," Lamont said Britain may be less affected than other countries because it is an oil producer, and he said the extra costs would not undermine British determination to evict Iraq from Kuwait. "Whatever is necessary for our troops to have in the Gulf to fulfil their obligations must have," he said.

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Egypt, Libya and Syria to hold Gulf crisis summit

CAIRO (R) — Libya, Egypt and Syria will hold summit talks on the Gulf crisis in the next few days. Egypt's Middle East News Agency (MENA) quoted Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi as saying Tuesday. Foreign ministers of the three countries would meet in Cairo Wednesday to prepare for the summit, MENA said in a dispatch from the Libyan capital, Tripoli. Egyptian Foreign Ministry officials were not immediately available for comment. The summit would group Qadhafi, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Syrian President Hafez Al Assad. MENA quoted Qadhafi as saying the summit would take place "within the next few days." He did not disclose its location. The summit, he said, would concentrate on the "situation in the Gulf to prevent further deterioration."

League offices empty in Tunis

TUNIS (AP) — The offices that housed the Arab League headquarters for 11 years stood closed Tuesday, and a building under construction that should have replaced it never will. The decision by the 21-member pan-Arab organisation to return the headquarters to Cairo was taken last March after Egypt was readmitted to the league. The final technicalities of the transfer were completed Monday. The move upset plans to build a new, permanent headquarters for the league in the Tunisian capital. The half-finished building means under construction. Government sources say it will now be home to three organisations: the Union of Arab Radios, the Council of Arab Ministers of the Interior, and the Arab League Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

Al Ahram claims 'saboteurs' held in Greece

CAIRO (AP) — Greek authorities arrested 15 Iraqis in transit to Europe on alleged sabotage missions that were to follow any attack on Iraq by multinational forces in the Gulf. Egypt's leading newspaper reported Tuesday. In a dispatch dated Athens, state-owned Al Ahram said the Iraqis were detained in recent days but did not give their destinations or targets. Al Ahram quoted "semiofficial sources close to Greek security authorities." The dispatch was marked "Special to Al Ahram," a customary euphemism for a government intelligence leak. But senior security officials in Athens denied the report. "Up to this moment no such thing has happened," an official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the Associated Press.

Sudanese march in support of Islam

KHARTOUM (AP) — Thousands of Sudanese Tuesday demonstrated their support of a decision by the country's military strongman to reactivate Islamic law. In downtown Khartoum, an estimated 3,000 men and women gathered for prayers of thanks to God for Omar Al Bashir's restoration of Sharia. The prayer leader, Imam Muhammad Bakheit, urged Muslims throughout Sudan to support implementation of Sharia and warned against opposing it. "What has been declared is a change of course in (Sudan's) history," Bakheit said.

280 Afghan rebels missing in storm

ISLAMABAD (R) — About 280 Afghan rebels are missing after being caught in a snowstorm near the Pakistan-Afghan border, a Pakistani government official said Tuesday. Assistant Commissioner Shabbir Ahmad of the frontier district of Chitral said a caravan of 318 Afghans was hit by a snowstorm Sunday on its way from Chitral to Afghanistan's northeast Badkshan province. About 40 of the Afghans returned to Chitral from the other side of the border and reported their comrades missing, he told Reuters.

Masri replaces Qasem; 5 Brotherhood members, 2 Islamists among 10 new ministers

Cabinet reshuffled

AMMAN — Prime Minister Moudar Badran Tuesday reshuffled his one-year-old government by bringing in 10 new members into his cabinet and switching the portfolios of four serving members following the resignation of 10 ministers. The new minister except one was sworn in Friday before His Majesty King Hussein, who endorsed the reshuffle by issuing a Royal Decree. Under the reshuffle: Taher Al Masri replaced Mar-

Cabinet list

FOLLOWING is the list of the cabinet after Tuesday's reshuffle:

Prime Minister and defence: Moudar Badran
Deputy Prime Minister and Interior: Salem Massa'deh
Minister for Foreign Affairs: Taher Al Masri
Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs: Abdul Baqi Gannoun
Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs: Hikmat Al Saket
Information: Ibrahim Izzeldin
Culture and Youth: Khaled Karaki
Tourism and Antiquities: Daoud Khalaf
Justice: Majed Khalifa
Education: Abdullah Aqayleh
Higher Education: Saeed Al Tal
Transport and Telecommunications: Jamal Saraireh
Industry and Trade: Ziad Fariz
Energy and Mineral Resources: Thabet Al Taher
Religious Affairs: Ibrahim Zeid Keilani
Health: Adnan Jaljoui
Social Development: Youssef Al Athem
Public Works and Housing: Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh
Water and Irrigation: Saad Hayel Al Srouf
Agriculture: Mohammad Alawneh
Supply: Ibrahim Ayyoub
Finance: Bassel Jaradneh
Planning: Khaled Amin Abdullah
Labour: Moudar Badran
Road, Municipal and environmental affairs: Mohammad Adoub Al Zaben

King's European visit aims at developing EC mediation role

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The thrust of His Majesty King Hussein's talks this week with European leaders would be to develop an independent European Community (EC) effort towards resolving the five-month-old Gulf crisis as well as other problems of the Middle East, senior officials said Tuesday. Confirming that the King was scheduled to leave for London Wednesday, the officials noted that foreign ministers of the 12-nation EC are to meet Friday under a German-French initiative to explore means to peacefully resolve the Gulf crisis, sparked by the Aug. 2 Iraq invasion and subsequent annexation of Kuwait and the American-led opposition to it. The officials emphasised that the King's efforts should be seen against the backdrop of and complementary to other moves

towards breaking the stalemate in American-Iraqi contacts over the crisis for a parallel Arab-Arab dialogue.

These efforts, the officials noted, involve Algeria in an Arab context and Yugoslavia in a Third World approach. A senior official explained that the Jordanian approach to the Gulf crisis was based on four main points: Any solution to the problem should be based on international legitimacy; there should be a negotiated solution; Iraq's security, sovereignty and territorial integrity should be guaranteed and protected; and linkage should be established between the Gulf crisis and the Palestinian problem. However, the official said referring to the fourth point, "we are not going to specify what timeframe or what sequence the efforts to resolve the two problems should follow."

"What is important now is to establish the principle," added

the official, who preferred anonymity.

The official also underlined that the King's endeavours come amid efforts undertaken by Algerian President Chadli Benjedid and an initiative by the Non-Aligned Movement spearheaded by Yugoslav Foreign Minister Budimir Loncar, who visited Baghdad last week.

According to a Royal Palace official, "the Europeans are moving and the Arabs also have to move now before it is too late."

The official said the King's first stop would be London, where he will meet with British Prime Minister John Major in the first encounter between an Arab head of state and the premier, who succeeded Margaret Thatcher last month.

According to the Royal Palace official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, the King will also

Iraqi leader visits troops on frontline, reiterates resolve

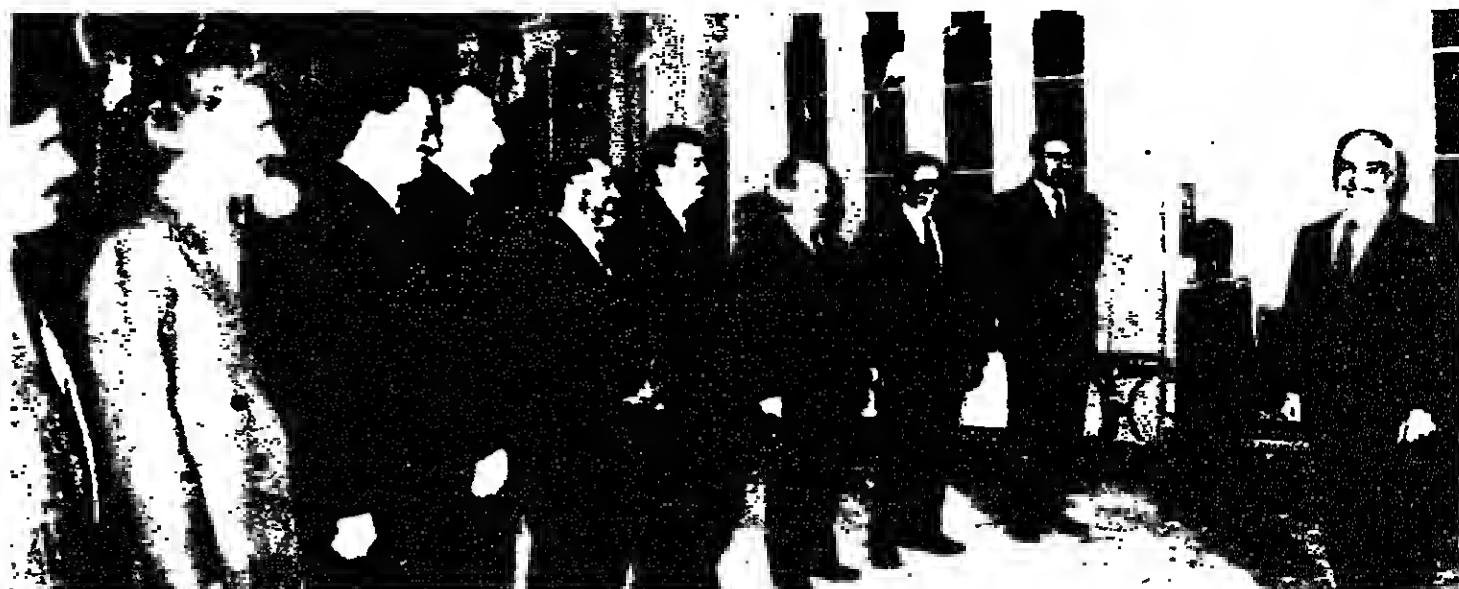
Combined agency dispatches

IRAQI PRESIDENT Saddam Hussein visited his military forces on the front on New Year's eve, prayed with them for victory and even cooked dinner for some of them, Baghdad Radio and television reported Tuesday. In remarks to the forces, Saddam said Iraq would not pull out from Kuwait, despite the Jan. 15 U.N. deadline to withdraw. He lashed out at Saudi Arabia's King Fahd for inviting foreign forces to the region, and accused the king of squandering billions of dollars to pay for the military clout at the expense of poor Arab countries. The president also said that Iraq, a country of some 17 million, has mobilised 60 military divisions for the Gulf standoff. He said that compared with 14 divisions in the multinational force in Saudi Arabia. On the diplomatic front, Middle East allies will probably receive a visit from U.S. Secretary of State James Baker before the Jan. 15 deadline. Baker is expected to affirm the allies' milit-

ary preparedness, but some said his presence in the region left open the possibility of talks with Iraq.

A U.S. government official who revealed the possible Baker trip said the visit would be to "touch bases" with Gulf leaders. There are no immediate plans for Baker to travel to Iraq. Saddam has suggested that Baker meet with him on Jan. 12, a date the U.S. government contends is too close to the Jan. 15 deadline. U.S. officials had proposed Jan. 3 to begin talks. Iraqi Television showed Tuesday footage of Saddam, dressed in a military beret and great coat, pouring what appeared to be salt into a large steaming pot on an open fire.

A soldier stirred the mixture with a paddle spoon as the president looked on with several officers at his side. Another scene showed Saddam helping to lift the lid off the pot. He poured something from another container into the pot and then stirred it himself with the spoon. The Iraqi media said Saddam



His Majesty King Hussein with nine of the 10 new ministers who were sworn in Tuesday (Mohammad Alawneh, who was named minister of agriculture, is to be sworn in later).

Reshuffle strengthens Badran's base

By Jordan Times
Staff Reporters

AMMAN — Tuesday's government reshuffle is a landmark in Jordan's political history as it included for the first time members of the Muslim Brotherhood movement and other major blocs in Parliament proportional to their representative weight but excluding the Democratic Bloc. The reshuffle, which capped six weeks of intense negotiations between Prime Minister Moudar Badran and the various blocs in the Lower House of Parliament, is seen as a concerted effort by the premier to strengthen his government's parliamentary base and assure its survival for many months to come. (The Muslim Brotherhood, riding on the slogan "Islam is the solution," bagged 22 seats in the 80-member Lower House in November 1989 elections).

Premier reiterates total support for Palestinians

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Moudar Badran reaffirmed Jordan's full support for the Palestinian people in their struggle to regain their legitimate rights and pledged support for the Palestinian uprising. Addressing a public rally held at the Palace of Culture to mark the 26th anniversary of the Palestinian revolution and the Palestinian National Day, Badran hailed the "Palestinian martyrs and leaders of the Palestinian uprising and reviewed the challenges facing the Palestinian people and the whole Arab nation. Badran said the massive wave of Jewish immigration to Palestine and the presence of foreign forces in the Gulf region as well as the "double standards followed in applying international legitimacy were major challenges to the whole Arab Nation. "We have seen how the United Nations Security Council, which is supposed to be an international council, deals with the issues of the region in two different standards," Badran said. He noted that the council had issued tens of resolutions on the

portfolios of transport and communication and agriculture respectively, coupled with the five Brotherhood members gives the new cabinet a more Islamist character.

With the reshuffle the Islamists are likely to exert greater influence in shaping Jordan's internal politics especially that the influence of leftists and seculars has been diluted with the departure from the cabinet of Minister of Tourism Abdul Karim Kabariti, Minister of Labour Qasem Obeidat, Minister of Youth Ibrahim Ghababsheh, Minister of Education Mohammad Hamdan and Minister of Agriculture Suleiman Arabiyat.

The premier replaced Foreign Minister Marwan Al Qasem with Taher Al Masri, who was elected to the Lower House in the November 1989 elections after serving as foreign minister. Masri, who chairs the Foreign Affairs Committee

of the House and is a member of the National Bloc in the House, will also strengthen Badran's parliamentary base. Masri also enjoys immense popularity.

The prime minister also gave Saad Hayel Al Srouf, another National Bloc member, the portfolio of water and irrigation. Although some mainstream Jordanian politicians expressed dismay at what they see as the Islamists' rise to power, others contend that it is time for secular movements to sit in the opposition and evaluate their performance, which even seculars claim was a failure. Observers believe that the popularity gained by Islamist ideology will be tested now that they are sitting in the seats of power.

On another level, the prime minister retained technocrats who have been working with

(Continued on page 5)

4 Palestinians shot dead in W. Bank

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Soldiers shot and killed four Palestinians as they broke up a demonstration in the West Bank marking the anniversary of the first military operation against Israel by the mainstream Palestinian group Fatah. The army confined more than one million Palestinians to their homes in the occupied territories and hundreds of extra police patrolled occupied Jerusalem. In the West Bank village of Rajih, near Nablus, Palestinians shot off fireworks, danced and chanted to mark "Fateh Day," the 26th anniversary of the attack on Israel's water system by the faction led by Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat. Soldiers tried to stop the celebrations, eventually opening fire on stone-throwing youths, witnesses said. They said Bilal Fandi, 19, from Nablus, was killed in the clash and the army clamped a curfew on the village. Later troops firing on Fateh Day protesters in Kabatya vil-

lage killed Faleh Al Arouh, 23, residents said. Security sources said troops encountered two masked men in the Khuzza village, one of a few areas in Gaza Strip not under army curfew. The troops opened fire after the two refused orders to halt, the sources said.

Fateh, the largest faction of the PLO, has issued a leaflet urging activists of the West Bank and Gaza Strip "to scorch the land under the feet of the occupiers."

Palestinians had stepped up their uprising against Israel ahead of the anniversary. At least seven people have been killed and 150 injured by Israeli forces since Saturday.

In Burka village near Nablus, 150 women marched with Palestinian flags. "Only through this," said one activist pointing to his gun, "can we achieve our goals and make peace — not a peace of (Israeli Prime Minister) Yitzhak Shamir and (U.S.) President (George) Bush — but our own peace."

Siad Barre said under rebel siege

NAIROBI (AP) — Rebels claimed to control the presidential palace and most of the capital of Somalia Tuesday and said they had surrounded the president, who was hiding in a bunker near the airport. But other sources disputed the guerrillas' claims. Telex and telephone lines between Nairobi and Mogadishu were not working Tuesday and it was not immediately possible to determine the current situation in the capital. The number of casualties in the fighting, which peaked on Monday, was not known, but an Italian diplomat in the capital of Mogadishu said they "must be numerous." The combat eased early Tuesday, the U.S. State Department said. President Mohammad Siad Barre's forces "have done all they can to annihilate the country, without any consideration for the civilian population, whereas we only strike at military targets," said Abdul Kader Mohammad Abdulle, a spokesman for the rebel United Somali Congress (USC).

Siad Barre has led the Horn of Africa nation of eight million for two decades. In an earlier communique, the rebels claimed fighting raged at an air force base at Somalia's international airport and said the president was leading government troops in the counterattack. Later, Abdulle said that the "tyrant Siad Barre is trying to escape the country and is hiding out in a bunker by the military

airport, which is surrounded by the forces of the USC."

Diplomatic and Somali sources say Siad Barre for several months has lived largely at a bunker at the airport. Presumably, such proximity to the airport would allow for an easy escape. In their earlier communique, the insurgents said they had seized the airport, state television and radio and were in control of Mogadishu, according to the Italian news agency ANSA. Telecommunications to the country were cut early Tuesday and the rebels claimed it was because they had occupied the installations, according to ANSA. However, Somalia's foreign minister, Ahmad Mohammad

(Continued on page 3)

Iraq forms five new elite army divisions

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq has formed five new divisions of the elite Republican Guards, the cream of its army, for possible deployment in the Kuwait theatre, an Arab military analyst said Tuesday.

The analyst, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the new divisions totalling around 130,000 men were formed from reservists and conscripts who have been mobilised since Iraq invaded Kuwait Aug. 2.

"Most of them have good combat experience from the war with Iran and many of them have served in the guards corps before," said the analyst, who has had long experience in Arab military affairs.

There was no immediate official confirmation of the report. But it came amid nationwide mobilisation as the Gulf crisis moves closer to the Jan. 15 deadline set by the United Nations Security Council for Iraq to relinquish all of Kuwait or face an offensive by the U.S.-led multinational force assembling in Saudi Arabia.

Iraq has mobilised an estimated 400,000 men in four waves. In the last mobilisation announced two days ago the Defence Ministry called up 17-year-old youngsters for the first time in the country's history.

Iraq has an estimated one million men under arms, backed by a militia estimated at around 850,000 men.

An estimated 510,000 troops are in Kuwait and a strategic reserve mustered in southern Iraq. All told, they have an estimated 4,000 tanks, 2,500 armoured fighting vehicles and a 2,700 artillery guns spread out behind formidable defences.

The mobile reserve includes most of the original six Republican Guards divisions, which spearheaded the invasion of Kuwait.

The guards fought in most of the major battles in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. Unlike the other 50 army divisions which have numbers, the Republican Guards have names such as Bahloul and Allah Akbar.

The analyst said four of the new divisions named Al Adnan, Al Abed, Al Nida'a and Al Mustafa.

Adnan is an apparent reference to former defence minister Adnan Khairallah, killed in a helicopter crash in 1989. Al Nida'a is Iraq's name for Kuwait City. Abed and Mustafa are names relating to the Prophet Mohammed, Islam's founder.

Troops selected for the guards corps then undergo more intensive training than other units, including commando and para-troop courses. Great emphasis is also placed on motivation and endurance.

The analyst said the guards are probably the Iraqi units most suited to carry out assaults against the U.S.-led forces in the Gulf if war erupts.

Pentagon spokesman Stuart Wagner said few details were immediately available on the circumstances of the latest incidents, which are being checked.

Marine Anthony D. Stewart, 19, of Yonkers, New York, died he was shot in the accidental discharge of another marine's M-16 rifle Saturday, Wagner said.

On Monday, an army second lieutenant died of what the Pentagon termed an apparent M-16 gunshot wound. No foul play was suspected, but the incident is being investigated.

The officer, whose name was withheld until his relatives have been notified, was assigned to a supply and transportation battalion. No other details were disclosed.

Another soldier, assigned to an air defence unit, died Sunday of an apparent heart attack in Bahrain. No details were released.

A soldier was killed Saturday when he was sucked into a water pump at a desalination plant in Saudi Arabia, Wagner said.

Also Sunday, a sailor was killed in a two-car accident in Saudi Arabia.

Wagner said he had no details on the accident, but a North Carolina newspaper reported that the victim was Jay Thomas, 25, a navy aircraft technician from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and that the accident occurred near the Red Sea port city of Jeddah.

The travellers reported that Kuwait's markets were stocked with food. Clubs and restaurants had reopened and shopping areas were doing brisk trade.

6 U.S. soldiers die in Gulf

SAUDI ARABIA (AP) — An American soldier died after apparently shooting himself with his M-16 rifle, the U.S. central command reported Tuesday.

He was the sixth serviceman to die in accidents, two involving shootings, since Saturday.

The central command said it was investigating the death of the soldier found dead Monday from an apparently self-inflicted gunshot wound.

The soldier, who was not identified pending notification of his next of kin, was with a supply and transportation battalion.

The latest death raised to 53 the number of American personnel killed in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf since Operation Desert Shield began Aug. 7.

Forty-one other personnel assigned to Desert Shield have died in accidents outside the Gulf area.

Forty-three of the deaths in the Gulf theater were accidental, two were suicides, six were from natural causes and two are still being investigated.

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Pope urges leaders not to allow 1991 to be year of Mideast war

VATICAN CITY (Agencies) — Pope John Paul, speaking on the Roman Catholic Church's World Day of Peace, urged national leaders Tuesday to stop 1991 from becoming the year of war in the Middle East.

"With sentiments of distress, my wish goes out to the Middle East, hoping that 1991 will be a year of peace and not war for everybody," the Pope told pilgrims and tourists in St. Peter's Square for his New Year's Day blessing.

"May peace be with all peoples. Through the efforts of all those who have responsibility for the fate of nations, may efforts to favour peace see success," he said.

A week ago, in his Christmas message to the world, the Pope urged national leaders to realise that a war in the Gulf would be "an adventure with no return."

The United Nations Security Council has said Iraq may face military action by a 500,000-strong multinational force if it does not withdraw from Kuwait by Jan. 15.

The Pope has condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

In an interview with an Italian newspaper Sunday, the Vatican's recently retired secretary of state, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, hinted at a possible papal mediation in the Gulf crisis.

But the Vatican said later he had been speaking in a private capacity and that the Holy See had not received any request for mediation.

Aquino's appeal

Philippine President Corazon Aquino appealed Tuesday for peace in the Middle East as officials warned that a full-scale war in the Gulf could devastate the Philippines' economy.

"Let it be a massive plea so that war may not once more be inflicted on the world," Aquino said in a taped message to worshippers at a World Peace Day mass.

"No, certainly not in that region where more than a half million of our countrymen are working so that they might contribute to the rebuilding of our nation," she said.

Aquino was referring to an estimated 700,000 Filipinos working in the Middle East, mostly in Saudi Arabia.

Last week, Foreign Secretary Raul Manglapus said it would be impossible for the government to evacuate all of them back to the Philippines in case of war.

The Gulf crisis was among the reasons for a slowdown in the Philippine economy during 1990. Tension between Iraq and the U.S.-led coalition forced a 45 per cent increase in oil prices here last month and threatens to heat up inflation, already at 12 per cent.

On Monday, Labour Secretary Ruben Torres said 3.4 million Filipinos may lose their jobs in 1991 if there is a war in the Gulf. That would push the unemployment rate from 8.6 per cent to 15 per cent.

Aquino noted the threat of war in the Gulf, saying "with the rest of humanity, we share the disquiet brought by the threat of war."

"We hope for a just and peaceful resolution to the conflict, not just for reasons of economic pragmatism but for the triumph of decency and sovereignty," she said.

Allied aircraft were fitted what is called identification friend or foe (IFF) devices which tell a pilot in words or symbols on a screen in his cockpit whether another plane is hostile.

Allied fighters and bombers would also fly at specific speeds and pre-ordained altitudes — known as tracks — to indicate to allied air defence centres that they are friendly.

As a last resort, the sources said, there was visual identification.

Unlike Europe, where pilots could use mist, low cloud and rolling hills to hide, the clear skies above the vast Arabian desert would leave Iraqi pilots with nowhere to go.

(The non-Gulf Arab elements in the multinational force — from Egypt, Syria and Morocco — have indicated that they would not participate in an offensive action against Iraq.)

Other documents prepared for a meeting between British and U.S. officials argued that a "successful military solution requires that Western forces should be poised to intervene quickly before hostile opinion has time to build up."

The first item on the cabinet agenda for 1990 was a report by Foreign Secretary Selwyn Lloyd saying the ruler of Kuwait, Sheikh Abdullah, wanted a more rapid reduction of British jurisdiction.

Foreign Office memos noted that Sheikh Abdullah had formally asked Britain to sound out Iraq over a final settlement of their border. One British memo described this as "a welcome change from his dodging of the issue in recent years."

Allies may need three days for air supremacy — strategists

SAUDI ARABIA (R) — U.S.-led forces are likely to take up to three days, rather than hours, to gain air supremacy over Iraq if war erupts in the Gulf, Western military sources say.

Iraq is likely to throw its planes into an air offensive as soon as any hostilities break out over Kuwait.

"Iraq will get some of (its) aircraft airborne and try to do that," one of the sources told Reuters.

While opposing fighters wage dogfights above the desert for mastery of the skies, each side will send bombers to strike enemy's airfields, command posts and missile batteries.

Contrary to media reports which have suggested the allies would destroy Iraq's force of nearly 700 combat planes on the ground in as little as six hours, the sources said they expected Iraq to get some of its Mirage and Tupolev bombers off the ground for an air offensive.

There was no doubt that the allies, with 2,400 combat planes and better equipment, would achieve air supremacy, but it would take about three days to accomplish.

"You'll never destroy them all, but we will shoot down those that manage to take off and keep the rest grounded by repeatedly hitting airbases," said an air warfare specialist.

The allies would use their air power to neutralise Iraq's radar, missile batteries, command centres and troop concentrations.

Bombers, escorted by fighters, would then shut down Iraq's military supply routes, isolating its ground forces and setting them up for the kill by close-air support planes like the Fairchild A-10 tank-killer.

"With no orders getting through to commanders, with no fuel, ammunition, food or water, and under constant bombardment, the Iraqi soldiers' morale should crack," said a senior officer.

The sources said they regarded an air campaign as crucial in saving casualties among allied ground forces. The aim would be to bludgeon the Iraqis into bloody immobility to clear the way for a ground assault.

Air attacks would be mounted from several directions, from land based in Saudi Arabia and possibly Turkey, as well as from six aircraft carriers in the Gulf and the Red Sea.

One strategist compared the allied air plan to controlling fast-moving traffic on city highways — keeping the variety of aircraft moving at different speeds in lanes or corridors.

But air control was fraught with problems.

Identifying friend from foe in a fast-moving air battle would be vital to avoid what the allies call "blue on blue" — shooting down friendly aircraft.

The problem has been recognised since the 1970s when NATO and Warsaw Pact air forces in Europe adopted standoff missiles capable of striking a target well beyond visual range.

"We've rehearsed and practised this over and over in NATO," said one military official. "Essentially, we've taken NATO procedures and adopted them here in the desert."

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MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Sick taken off 'peace boat' to hospital

BAGHDAD (R) — The U.S. navy has taken a sick Japanese "peace-boat" interested in the woman from an Iraq-bound "peace-boat" in the Arabian Sea to hospital in Muscat. A Japanese embassy official said on Tuesday. The official gave no details of the illness of Masako Karasawa, 56. An Iraqi freighter Ben Khalid was in critical condition. The Iraqi freighter Ben Khalid was stopped and diverted by Western warships patrolling the Gulf region, and was carrying food and other cargo banned under a United Nations embargo, Western sources said. About 250 women and children were on board. The Iraqi News Agency reported Saturday that the vessel was besieged by 10 U.S. and other warships about 20 miles off Oman's Masirah Island in the Arabian Sea. Western naval sources said a U.S. boarding party scuffled with crew and some of the activists last Wednesday before forcing the ship to sail under escort to a non-Iraqi port. The Ben Khalid was bound for the Iraqi port of Umm Qasr with sugar, rice, cooking oil and other cargo.

Lebanese salute New Year with gunfire

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanese saluted the New Year with volleys of gunfire, defying an army ban as part of efforts to end 15 years of civil war. Tracer bullets lit the night sky and the crackle of gunfire echoed across the capital at midnight on Monday. "Maybe Beirut wouldn't be Beirut if they didn't welcome the new year with gunfire," one resident said. There were no reports of injuries from the shooting. The army, which last month took over a militia-free, united Beirut and prohibited arms under the government's peace drive, had called on all civilians to refrain from bringing out guns to celebrate the New Year.

Death sentence upheld on Tunisian diplomat

TUNIS (R) — An appeal court upheld the death sentence on a Tunisian diplomat convicted of selling state secrets to a foreign power, official sources said Tuesday. The court issued its ruling Monday. The fate of the diplomat, 58-year-old Lamari Dali, coo rests with Tunisian President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali. Dali's wife said Tuesday the family was appealing to Ben Ali to grant a presidential pardon. Judicial sources say Dali, who was deputy director for African affairs in the Foreign Ministry in Tunis, was caught passing maps and secret military documents to U.S. diplomats. The documents concerned another Arab country, they said. The United States uses its embassy in Tunis to watch events in Libya, with which it has no diplomatic relations. Dali was sentenced after a one-day closed trial on Dec. 25 and the appeal to the higher court was automatic. The diplomat's family maintains that he is innocent and was forced to make confessions under torture. Tunisian officials have dismissed the allegations of torture. The independent newspaper Al Sahab said Tuesday that the judge who sentenced Dali died of a heart attack Sunday. Judge Taieb Ben Abd, 50, was the best known in the country and specialised in cases with political connotations. He was attacked with sulphuric acid in 1987 after sentencing Muslim fundamentalists arrested during a crackdown ordered by former President Habib Bourguiba.

Iranian merchant ship docks at Doha

NICOSIA (R) — The Iranian freighter Hormuz-25 docked at Doha, inaugurating a new trade link between Qatar and Iran. The ship arrived Monday night from the Iranian port of Bushire. It carried 46 passengers including Iranian trade and finance officials, the Qatar News Agency said. Qatari transport official Abdullah Hussain Salet said the sea link would stimulate the movement of goods and passengers. There would be a regular weekly voyage between the two ports, the news agency said. Relations between Iran and Gulf Arab states have improved since Iraq's Aug. 2 takeover of Kuwait, a key member in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which also includes Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Bahrain. Iran's Bandar Abbas port already has a thriving trade link with Dubai. Tehran has agreed with Bahrain to revive a sea navigation route after a break of more than a decade.

British MP volunteers for Gulf duty

LONDON (AP) — Charles Goodson-Wickes, a Conservative member of parliament, has volunteered for duty in a British army medical support team in the Gulf, the Times of London reported Tuesday. Goodson-Wickes, 45, will rejoin the life guards as a surgeon-captain, the newspaper said, adding that Goodson-Wickes apparently is the first MP to serve in a military unit since World War II. The Ministry of Defence had recently called for volunteers to serve in medical units supporting British forces in the Gulf.

Britain to cut diplomatic staff in Iraq

LONDON (R) — Britain will sharply reduce the staff at its embassy in Baghdad in the next few days, the Foreign Office said Tuesday. A spokesman said that now almost all Britons had been evacuated from Iraq in the face of a possible war, the embassy staff was being cut to six from a full team of 16. Only a few diplomats were needed after the halt in commercial activity because of the international economic embargo on Iraq and the decline in demand for consular services, the spokesman said. The ambassador would remain with a couple of senior diplomats and support staff, he added. Britain's last two remaining diplomats in Kuwait left the country last month. The diplomats said their embassy was still considered open, even though it was unstaffed. Apart from embassy staff, only 24 Britons are left in Iraq and about 30 in Kuwait following last month's evacuation of thousands of people trapped after the August invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, the spokesman said. Britain has the biggest contingent after the United States in the international force deployed against Iraq.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 77311-19	
PROGRAMME ONE	
15:30	Koran
15:40	Programme review
15:45	Children's programme
17:30	Educational programme
18:00	News summary in Arabic
18:45	Cairo news message
18:50	Local programme
20:00	News in Arabic
21:30	Arabic programme
23:00	News in Arabic
23:40	Play
PROGRAMME TWO	
18:00	Documentary
19:00	News in French
19:15	Varieties
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:30	'After Henry
21:10	Economic Perspective
22:00	News in English
23:20	A Quiet Conspiracy
PRAYER TIMES	
05:49	Fajr
06:31	(Sunrise) Dhuha
14:25	'Asr
16:48	Maghrib
18:10	'Isha

CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swellish, Tel. 810740	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terresanta Church Tel. 622366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 654952	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
It will be partly cloudy and winds will be westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.	

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Tayser Saadi	777636
Dr. Mohammad Hourani	898532
Dr. Ibrahim Abu Hamid	677436
Dr. Isam Hawandeh	624830
Al Salam pharmacy	636750
Ferdous pharmacy	778336
Al Asema pharmacy	637055
Natrouk pharmacy	623672
Al Salam pharmacy	636750
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shmeisan pharmacy	637660
IRBID:	
Dr. Mohammad Sharara	(278825)
Al Sharara pharmacy	(278825)

JORDAN AIRLINES	
Tel: 77311-19	
FOR THE TRAVELLER	
QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT	
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)3320-5, where it should always be verified.	
ARRIVALS	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
10:00	Damascus (RJ)
10:00	Jeddah (RJ)
10:30	Riyadh (RJ)
10:45	Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:55	Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:00	Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
17:30	London (RJ)
17:30	Madrid (RJ)
18:30	Paris (RJ)
18:45	Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
18:55	Frankfurt (RJ)
19:30	Brussels, Rome (RJ)
19:30	Aqaba (RJ)
19:30	Paris (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)	
17:30	Dubai (EK)
18:55	Bahrain (TK)
20:25	Sana'a (LH)
21:55	Karachi (PK)
MARKET PRICES	
Upper/lower price in Jds per kg.	
Apple	600 / 500
Banana	500 / 450
Banana (Mukammal)	450 / 400
Beans	400 / 350
Cabbage	100 / 50
Carrot	180 / 140
Cauliflower	160 / 100
Corn	200 / 150
Cucumbers (large)	180 / 120
Cucumbers (small)	410 / 350
Dates	500 / 400
Eggplant	180 / 140
Garlic	400 / 1000
Lemon	200 / 150
Malware	180 / 120
Peas	120 / 80
Marrow (large)	240 / 200
Marrow (small)	240 / 200
Onion (dry)	250 / 200
Onion (green)	250 / 100
Olea	400 / 350
Orange	400 / 350
Pepper (hot)	200 / 150
Pepper (sweet)	150 / 100
Potato	300 / 250
Radish	150 / 100
Sage	500 / 400
Spinach	120 / 80
Tomatoes	280 / 220

King congratulates Sudan

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein has sent a cable of good wishes to the head of Sudan's Revolutionary Command Council Omar Al Bashir on his country's independence anniversary.

The King wished the Sudanese ruler continued health and happiness and the Sudanese people further progress and prosperity.

On the anniversary, Sudan's Ambassador to Jordan Abdullah Jibara said that ever since it won independence, Sudan had maintained strong ties with Jordan and bilateral cooperation in all fields had been boosted.

Jibara paid tribute to King Hussein for his role to defuse the Gulf crisis and end the presence of foreign forces on Arab land.

Referring to his country's stand vis-a-vis the Gulf crisis, Jibara said that Khartoum called for the total withdrawal of all foreign forces from the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf waters so that a peaceful settlement can be found. He said Sudan called for the international legitimacy to be applied to all issues in the Middle East and the Gulf.

Referring to the situation in southern Sudan, Jibara said that the current separatist movement in the south continues to receive support and assistance from col-

Parliamentarians urge strong support for the Armed Forces

AMMAN (J.T.) — Speakers and members of both houses of Parliament have been briefed on the role of the Jordanian Armed Forces which are now shouldering heavier military burdens in view of the current situation in the Gulf region.

The briefing was presented by Army Chief of Staff Fathi Abu Taleh and the commander of the People's Army at a meeting, held at the army headquarters, attended by His Majesty King Hussein, Prime Minister Mudar Badran and other officials.

In pointing out the various serious duties of the Armed Forces in Jordan under the present circumstances, Abu Taleh said that Jordan, which continues to guard the longest confrontation line with the Israeli enemy, feels that its duties are doubled in view of the looming dangers, especially those resulting from the Gulf crisis and the divisions among Arab ranks, particularly Arab countries in direct confrontation with the Israeli enemy.

Therefore, he said, the Armed Forces are going ahead with plans to bolster the People's Army and give every citizen the opportunity to contribute towards the country's defence.

The commander of the People's Army outlined to the parliamentarians the different stages of development of the People's Army in Jordan.

Speakers of both houses of Parliament addressed the meeting paying tribute to the efforts of the Armed Forces and calling on the Jordanian people to give them all the support they need.

The parliamentarians' visit was the second since the restoration of parliamentary life to Jordan in November 1988. During the first visit the deputies were

also briefed on the military situation in the region, and on the Armed Forces preparations to deal with any eventualities.

In response to calls for bolstering the People's Army in Jordan, Deputy Ziyad Shweikh Tuesday announced the donation of JD 100,000 and his whole salary from Parliament to the People's army.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Shweikh said that Jordan and the Arab World were going through very difficult circumstances requiring from all citizens in the Kingdom to offer sacrifices to the Armed Forces and the People's Army to enable its recruits to acquire proper training and modern weapons for the defence of the homeland.

Describing the Armed Forces as the shield of the nation, Shweikh urged all citizens to contribute towards bolstering the country's defences.

Shweikh, who represents the Governorate of Maan, belongs to the National Bloc in the Lower House of Parliament.

Queen Noor tours Azraq evacuee camps

AZRAQ (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein has made an inspection tour of evacuee camps in Azraq and acquainted herself with current preparations for hosting new groups of evacuees expected to arrive in Jordan.

The Queen was briefed by Salameh Hammad, head of a government-appointed committee on evacuee affairs, on the situation in the Azraq camps I and II, the facilities made available for the evacuees' convenience and the services to be offered them.

The Queen toured the two camps where she inspected the newly paved roads leading to the camps and facilities to help residents cope with the bad weather conditions.

The camps are being readied for the evacuees following a Jordanian government approval of a request by international organisations to allow 5,000 Vietnamese nationals to be repatriated through Jordan after crossing in at the Rweished border post near the Iraqi-Jordanian border.

Hammad said that the Vietnamese, who are expected to arrive in the coming few days, would be leaving for home early this year.

He said that preparations were underway to help receive and care for the new batches of evacuees arriving in Jordan.

He said that the bad weather conditions and high winds over the past days had destroyed 500 tents and other facilities.

Nearly 800,000 evacuees of various nationalities, mostly Asians, passed through Jordan after fleeing the Gulf over the past four months.

The Queen was accompanied on the tour by a group of Jordanian officials and the president of the Jordanian National Red Cross Society (JNRCS), Dr. Ahmad Abu Qoura, whose teams take direct supervision of the evacuees' affairs in the two camps in cooperation with international humanitarian organisations.

Jordan braces for possible new wave of Gulf evacuees

By Ralph Dannheisser
USIA Staff Correspondent

AMMAN — Jordan, which was inundated by a flood of refugees soon after Iraq invaded Kuwait last August 2, is making plans to cope with a second wave of arrivals if and when the U.S. and its allies decide they must exert more pressure against the Iraqis.

This time, Jordanian officials hope to receive a bigger and timelier assistance from the United Nations and the international community.

Sami Farraj, who has played a key role in Jordan's refugee relief effort in his work with the Expatriates Welfare Committee, expresses confidence that talks and other preparations now underway will indeed produce such cooperation.

The planning will also assure that "we will not be taken by surprise as before," Farraj said in a recent interview.

A Jordanian government report issued in November shows the size of the problem the country faces. It quotes a United Nations study, reporting that by mid-October some 809,000 third country nationals had fled Kuwait and Iraq. And of that total, fully 709,000 — or 88 per cent — came across the border into Jordan. (In addition, another 60,000 were estimated to have escaped through Turkey, 30,000 through Iran and 10,000 through Syria).

The U.N. report, prepared by Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, cites Jordan as the biggest contributor to refugee assistance, with \$47 million expended on emergency aid in the first wave of arrivals.

And, the report notes, "this amount does not reflect the impact of Jordanians who returned from Kuwait to the already very fragile national economy, nor does it reflect increased personnel expenditures by the Ministry of Interior necessary to ensure functioning of operation."

Estimating that by early December the cost to Jordan of refugee operations had grown to \$60 million, he points out that the U.N. and other contributors still have covered only about \$10 million of this amount.

He says the August evacuees represented many nationalities, the largest number being Egyptians, and others coming from the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Somalia, Yemen, Nepal, Thailand, Liberia, and Sudan.

For the first month or so, Farraj says, his country coped with the daily influx of refugees without outside assistance, providing them with water, food, supplies, health services, and help in finding transportation.

"We weren't prepared in the very beginning. We thought their embassies would take care of their nationals," Farraj recalls. But, he says, that proved not to be the case and "the committee was in a mess," doing its best to provide for the swelling numbers.

Finally, on September 3, the U.N. entered the picture and helped share the burden, Farraj says, noting that the Red Cross, the Red Crescent and other organisations then joined in the effort as well.

As of mid-December, Farraj estimates, all but about 3,000 of the refugees had been repatriated to their own countries; he says a daily small trickle of new arrivals joins those who remain in Jordan.

But now, with the looming threat of a war breaking out in the Gulf after Jan. 15, lead time for Jordan to prepare for a new wave of refugees is shrinking fast.

Farraj says that "no one can predict how big the problem might be." He notes that the U.N. Plan of Action speculates that as many as 300,000 more persons could flee Kuwait and Iraq. The plan, he points out, sets forth low, medium and high options — options that carry costs ranging from \$71 million to \$150 million. And again, the largest number of refugees would be expected to arrive in Jordan, he says.

The report lays out a contingency plan projecting how the new arrivals would be housed, how they would be fed, how they would be returned to their own countries.

Farraj pledges that, if the need arises, "Jordan will not hesitate" to take the new evacuees in. "We can't keep these people suffering over there," he says.

But, he insists, "it is an international problem. It is not the responsibility of Jordan itself. The United Nations has to play a big role."

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

JD 5m allocated for roads in 1991

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Raouf Al Rawabdeh Tuesday said 1991 was the year of administrative and financial development and safety on roads. At a meeting with senior ministry officials, Rawabdeh stressed the need for completing projects currently being implemented by the ministry, and called on the ministry officials to pay periodic field inspection visits to make sure that work is progressing in accordance with the plans. Rawabdeh pointed out that the ministry's budget this year included JD 55 million for roads, the largest ever budget any Public Works Ministry in Jordan had allocated for roads.

IDB approves loans for industrial projects

AMMAN (Petra) — The Industrial Development Bank (IDB) Monday approved two loans worth JD 128,000 to finance two industrial projects, one for grading and packing vegetables and fruit in Khadra area and the other for purchasing raw materials for a plastic bag factory. Monday's loans bring to JD 15,182,000 the total amount of loans provided by the bank to finance various industrial, tourist and medical services projects.

Balqa starts distributing food coupons

SALT (Petra) — Supply Department in Balqa Governorate Tuesday started distributing food coupons to citizens in the governorate, according to the department Director Jamil Al Saha. He said that the department had opened six centres throughout the governorate to distribute these coupons. The Supply Ministry has allocated 88 centres to distribute such coupons throughout the Kingdom. The centres have started distributing coupons in the various governorates. The ministry called on all people benefiting from these coupons to bring in their family registration books or passports and the food ration book.

17,935 news items broadcast in 1990

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordan News Agency, Petra, broadcast 17,935 local news items during the year 1990, compared to 14,612 news items in 1989. The number of Arab and international news items totalled 4,025, compared to 4,218 news items in 1989. The decline in the Arab and international news is attributed to the closure of some of the agency's offices abroad, in line with the austerity measures followed by the government to curb expenditure.

GUVS deplores peace ship seizure

AMMAN (J.T.) — The General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) has issued a statement describing as criminal the seizure of the peace ship which was carrying food supplies and medicine to the Iraqi children and said that the seizure violated the basic human rights and international humanitarian laws and principles.

The statement also attacked the presence of the foreign forces in the Gulf waters which "are imposing an economic blockade on Iraq and preventing relief supplies from reaching the children and the sick."

Meanwhile, a correspondent for the Jordan News Agency, Petra, on board the peace ship Ibn Khaldoun said in a dispatch that the western warships were still holding the ship and its passengers.

The 11,333 tonne Ibn Khaldoun was stopped in the north Arabian Sea, outside the Strait of Hormuz, and is now guarded by several warships.

Maani reported that the 240 women and children on board the ship were suffering from food and water shortages, but were determined to go ahead with their trip to Iraq to deliver the relief supplies.

The passengers on board have sent a cable of good wishes to Pope John Paul II, on New Year, appealing to His Holiness to back Arabs' just rights, bring peace to the Gulf and help provide protection to the Palestinians against Israeli atrocities.

The 11,333 tonne Ibn Khaldoun was stopped in the north Arabian Sea, outside the Strait of Hormuz, and is now guarded by several warships.

Mid-term tawjihi exams to be held next Tuesday

By Iyad Al Waqfi
Special to the Jordan Times

Oheidat said that 900 examination halls in various provinces had been prepared for the students in the literary, scientific, commercial, agricultural, industrial, nursing and hotel management streams.

AMMAN — A total of 62,748 male and female students at the tawjihi (high school) level will sit for their mid-year examination, set by the Ministry of Education next Tuesday, and the ministry is now preparing the sets of questions for them, according to Director of the ministry's Examination Department Mohammad Sayel Oheidat.

According to Oheidat, directors of education departments in various provinces held a meeting Tuesday to discuss arrangements for holding the general examinations in the coming week.

House meets, discusses committees' decisions

AMMAN (Petra) — The Lower House of Parliament holds a meeting Wednesday to discuss the formation of a special committee for water strategy, the Legal Committee's decision rejecting the axial weights law, and the decisions adopted by the Administrative Committee in addition to the Health Committee's decisions on water purification plant and the issuance of health insurance cards.

The House will also listen to the government's replies to a number of questions put forward by some deputies.

The meeting will be attended by Prime Minister Mudar Badran and cabinet ministers.

The House's Legal Committee also holds a meeting Wednesday to discuss a number of revised laws referred to it by the government.

Tuesday the agriculture and health committees held two separate meetings. In its meeting, the Agricultural Committee decided to cancel the interests on outstanding agricultural loans and to reschedule agricultural loans, to be paid over a period of six years, with a grace period of two years.

The Health and Environment Safety Committee decided to refer a complaint lodged by several specialist doctors to the Legal Committee.

Cabinet

(Continued from page 1)

Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid and Minister of Interior Salem Masa'deh. Alawneh was to be sworn in later.

Following the reshuffle, King Hussein sent a message to Badran stressing that the change of ministerial portfolios "reflects the vitality of the state as manifested by the democratisation process in Jordan and will no doubt help deepen and protect this march."

The King voiced his total confidence in Badran's government and wished its members full success in shouldering their responsibility.

"Those who had served in the government and now taken

other responsibilities, he said, will always remain trusted and their work as a source of pride for the country.

Following are profiles of the new ministers:

Taher Al Masri: Born in Nablus in 1942. Completed his secondary education at Al Najah School before going to Texas University where he graduated with a degree in commerce in 1965.

Masri had served as minister of foreign affairs as well as in other ministerial posts before being elected as member of the Lower House of Parliament in November 1988 and later as head of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House.

Saeed Al Tal: Born in Irbid in 1934. Finished high school in 1951 and obtained a degree in mathematics in 1957 and a

doctorate in 1963. Served as minister of education. At present Tal is a member of the Upper House of Parliament.

Adnan Al Jaljoui: Born in 1932 in Tulkarem, the West Bank. Graduated from Baghdad University in 1957. Worked for the Armed Forces as director of the military hospital in Marka and later director of the Islamic Hospital in Amman before starting private practice as an optician.

Jamal Saraireh: Born in Hashemeh, Karak in 1954. Secured a degree in English literature, Kuwait University (1976), and later a diploma in international law and relations from Wales University. Director of Aramco — Tapline office in Amman since 1982. Elected member of parliament in 1988 and as deputy speaker in

November 1990.

Mohammad Al Alawneh, Member of the Lower House from Irbid Governorate. He is an engineer by profession.

Saad Hayel Al Srour, Member of the Lower House representing the Badia district in the Mafrqa Governorate.

Majed Khalifa: Born in Salt in 1948. He holds a Ph.D. in law from the University of Cairo. He worked as deputy dean of the faculty of law at the University of Jordan and as a lawyer.

Dr. Abdullah Ali Al Aqayleh: Born in Amman in Tafleeh Governorate. Attended secondary school in Tulkarem. Received a degree in management from University of Jordan in 1975, a masters degree in management from University of Southern California in 1978 and Ph.D. in management from University of

Southern California in 1982.

Yousef Al Athem: Born in Ma'an in 1931. Graduated from Al Azhar University in Cairo with a degree in Arabic. Teacher of Islamic culture and Arabic literature at the Islamic Scientific College in Amman (1954-1962). Chief editor of Al Kifah Al Islami (Islamic struggle) newspaper from 1956 till 1958. One of the founders of Al Aqsa schools in Jordan. Was elected member of the Lower House for Ma'an Governorate in 1963 and again in 1967 and in 1988.

Ibrahim Zeid Al Keilani: Born in Salt in 1937. He got a Ph.D. degree in Islamic Tafseer (commentary) and the Koran from Azhar University in Egypt in 1973. He is a member of the Academy of Arabic, the Awqaf and Fatwa Council as well as the Muslim Brotherhood group.

Lecture debates book on patriarchy in Arab society

By Saeda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — While discussion was supposed to focus on the content of a book entitled "Neopatriarchy" and on the structure of Arab society, most of the participants at a lecture held at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC) chose to move the debate onto women and Islam.

Every month the centre holds a debate over the contents of a book. Professors and intellectuals are supposed to participate at the debate to present their viewpoints as well as their criticism.

The lecture this time was different, for most of the participants had not read the book, nor have many intellectuals actually participated. Nevertheless, the lecturer, Dr. Sahri Rubelhat, a sociologist and a criminologist at the Public Security Department, presented to the audience a comprehensive outlook on the main items in the book.

The book, "Neopatriarchy: a distorted change in Arab society," according to its author Hisham Al Sharabi, discusses basically the main factors that have led to the present state of decadence and "jahiliyyeh" (ignorance) the Arab society finds itself in.

Primarily, he attributes the decline and the backwardness of the Arab society to the phenomenon of neopatriarchy — modernity imposed in a patriarchal society. Tradition and dominance are the characteristics of the patriarchal society as Sharabi points out in his book; they exist in its different institutions, starting with the family, tribe and the state itself.

"There is always a patriarchy who dominates and rules, and dialogue is carried out vertically from top to bottom, training its members on submission and obedience," says Dr. Rubelhat. "The writer tries to put forward a theory of the main elements that led to the society's formation in this manner, explaining that the society has not achieved the stage of modernity due to the historical socio-economic changes it had undergone," Dr. Rubelhat said.

Sharabi presented two theories according to which a radical change may take place; either by fundamentalist revolution or a Marxist one. The former may induce change in the neopatriarchal system but, however, Sharabi argues that it may take us back to the traditional patriarchy.

The latter, which he later criticised as unsuitable to our society, demands a total liberation in the structure itself as well as an internal liberalisation of the individual. Woman's liberation is essential in this category, and giving access to the exploitation of people's energies and putting them into practise will lead to a better society, according to the author.

In his book, Sharabi cites some quotations of Nawal Al Sa'dawi, a prominent Egyptian writer on women and liberty, and of Hassan Al Banna, the founder of Muslim Brotherhood movement. However, the participants turned the discussion away from the main elements that led to the present state of Arab society of decline and loss of identity to the possibility of our ancestor's exercising patriarchy in their society and on whether Sharabi has the right to present theories on Arab society while he lives in the United States.

They also pointed out that Sharabi must cite some Quranic verses in addition to some comments on women and equality between men and women.

Siad Barre

(Continued from page 1)

citizens in the capital were summoned to the fortified U.S. embassy compound Tuesday, according to a Nairobi-based radio monitor.

The U.S. State Department said the fighting seems to have started when soldiers tried to confiscate weapons from "opponents" near the presidential palace.

The BBC, however, said the fighting stemmed from clashes Sunday that erupted after armed attackers broke into a warehouse and killed a senior army officer. At least 20 people were

killed and more than 50 wounded in that skirmish, said the BBC.

There has been an accelerating breakdown in law and order, increasing street crime and violence from security forces in the capital for most of the year.

Most Western embassies and aid and U.N. organisations have evacuated all but essential staff from the capital and have urged nationals there to private houses to leave.

The United Somali Congress is a recently formed group which springs from the large central Hawiye clan. The rebels have been advancing towards Mogadishu for several months and until Monday's battles were reported about 50 kilometres outside of the capital.

The USC is one of three loosely coordinated rebel groups that rejected government calls for negotiations in the past month, saying they prefer to remove Siad Barre at gunpoint.

The United States has been Siad Barre's strongest ally since the late 1970s, but has sharply reduced aid to recent years, citing human rights abuses.

Siad Barre, of the Marehan clan, has stayed in power by playing off the vying clans that make up the country's social organisation. He has been weakened by the loss of aid from the West and from Arab emirates since the Gulf crisis.



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Reshuffle deserves benefit of the doubt

IT WAS not long after the Lower House of Parliament elected as its speaker Muslim Brotherhood spokesman Abdul Latif Arahayat when Prime Minister Mudar Badran decided that the time had come to incorporate the Brotherhood and other parliamentary blocs in his cabinet. The effort got underway immediately, but it was not until yesterday that it came to fruition. Today we have a government that is largely different from last year's and one that could play a major role in reshaping our internal politics.

Where things go from here, we can only surmise. People on the left naturally see and interpret the change differently from the rightists. Even mainstream Jordanian politicians cannot agree among themselves what the step will actually mean to Jordanian politics, now or in the future.

It all depends of course on what each political bloc, those represented in the reshuffled cabinet and those who are not, expect from the current phase, which is simply unclear and not final at best. Our current political life is governed by so many external factors that it is indeed difficult to untie our future from that of the region generally, and the strife-torn Arab World in particular.

It is in light of the Gulf crisis and the situation surrounding it — regionally and worldwide — that Mr. Badran's cabinet reshuffle took place. How much one can read into it politically, therefore, cannot be easily assessed. But one thing is certain: The prime minister, with his famous political acumen, must have felt the change was timely and needed for him to have made it under the present circumstances.

For the first time in many years Jordan will be faced with a government make-up that is not totally homogeneous. There is then a task for not only Mr. Badran but his colleagues as well to work on a common platform for tackling the country's problems, be they economic or social or political. Whether ranks, disparate as they seem to be in the cabinet itself, can be closed to confront the challenges facing us is actually one of the more important of those challenges. But we hope that it can be done for the benefit of the whole society.

We all are aware that this is another experiment in our continuing and lively democratisation process. And we want it to succeed at a reasonable price.

Only the future can tell whether Jordan's new coalition can hold together and still produce results. We ought to give it the benefit of the doubt, in the full knowledge that other alternatives exist and that no prime minister can please all people and politicians all the time.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily said Tuesday that the Jordanian people welcome the new year 1991 with a greater measure of confidence than the past year, regardless of the economic circumstances and the looming danger. The paper said that the past year saw Iraq besieged by the forces of evil, but also witnessed more determination on the part of the Iraqi and Jordanian people and all those honest Arabs and Muslims to fight the common enemy. The past year can never be forgotten because it saw the full force of conspiracy being hatched, and the full force of evil being rallied to launch aggression on Iraq and the Arab land, the paper noted. For Jordan and its people, the new year brings new hopes because war or peace can only cement national unity and fuse further efforts on the part of the Jordanian people to confront the challenges and deal with all eventualities, the paper continued. We receive the new year more confident of the victory and glory awaiting the honest Arabs and Muslims who are determined to confront and abort aggression with pride and with more self-confidence and resolve, said the paper. Should war come, it stressed, the common enemies will find us more willing to fight and to find vent for our hatred and our lust for vengeance and shedding the enemy's blood on our soil. Iraq will not be the only Arab country which would be involved in fighting the enemy but rather all the honest Arab people whose leaders never wavered in their position and never given up their solidarity with the Iraqi people, said the paper. As we enter a new year, the paper concluded, we will carry on with us the memories of the past year, but we also feel more determined than ever before to confront the challenges looming in the offing.

A columnist in Al Ra'i Arabic daily on Tuesday criticised parliament members of the Muslim Brotherhood who submitted a note to the speaker of Parliament requesting that no celebrations be held in hotels, clubs or restaurants at Christmas and that no advertisements be placed in the press for such celebrations. Those deputies who are now preparing to join the government should beware of such action because they had been criticised before for demanding a ban on liquor in Jordan while they were waging an election campaign, says Salah Abdul Samad. The note to the House speaker is not in harmony with the new trend among the Muslim Brotherhood group for taking responsibility in running government affairs in Jordan. Some deputies of the Muslim Brotherhood group have refrained from supporting calls directed against trading in liquor because of the controversial nature of this subject, and therefore, it is surprising to see the Brotherhood demanding a ban on celebrations and advertisements for them in the press at a time when the Brotherhood members are making ready to become partners with the present government which does not share with them in the same views, the writer says. He notes that assuming ministerial posts calls for heavy responsibility at a time when the controversy stirred by certain Brotherhood elements in the past has not yet settled.

Economic Forum

Does it pay to borrow?

The capacity of an advanced country to borrow is practically limitless, especially in the case of a country which has a major convertible currency. The biggest debtor in the world is the United States not Brazil, Argentina or Mexico. If it does pay to borrow, advanced countries will go on borrowing without limits. Actually they do not and some of them even switch to lending.

The case of developing countries is different. Without dwelling on the specifics, the steady growth over the past fifteen years of their external debt which has ballooned to well over a trillion dollars is a conclusive macroeconomic evidence that external borrowing does not pay.

A country borrows at either commercial or soft terms. Commercial borrowing refers to loans acquired at the market interest rates with short or medium repayment periods and with short or no grace periods. For commercial borrowing to be productive, we need a very efficient producer and a genuinely feasible project, two formidable conditions which stand a very good chance of being satisfied in advanced countries but are not characteristic of developing countries. Thus a more intellectually appealing question is to ask whether it pays to borrow at soft terms by a developing country, a question which is most relevant to the case of Jordan in the present stage.

Let us remember first that external borrowing, as we often mentioned, signifies the disturbing fact that the savings of the country are not sufficient to finance its planned investments. As it

boosts investible funds, such borrowing lures a developing country to undertake marginal projects whose return might be as low as, or even less than, the interest on the soft loan. Thus after soft loans are repaid, the country will be left with a variety of inefficient projects which burden other projects and strain the performance of the national economy.

The history of foreign aid (which was defined, by the way, to include soft loans) indicates that such aid creates perpetual current expenditures. Therefore, only high-yield projects can really service external loans. If soft loans do not finance this type of projects, the chance that they become detrimental will be much greater.

Add to this another fact of economic life. External loans overwhelmingly go to the public sector and a great part of them finance infrastructure. Infrastructure projects are not only low-yield ones but are also highly capital-intensive. The incremental capital output ratio in the case of construction projects (buildings, roads, bridges) is as high as 12:1 compared with 4:1 for the national economy as a whole. This depresses their return down to the level of interest on very soft loans. Some of these projects have no return at all because they are dedicated as public utilities. Therefore, it pays only to finance them from grants or other public revenues not from any loans no matter how soft they are. External loans are channelled to public projects handed as

adequately feasible. Most often, the related feasibility studies turn out to be inadequately correct or the project is executed or managed in such a way as to render it less feasible or unfeasible altogether. In such cases, these projects fail to service even soft loans.

Developing countries including Jordan are failing to service their external debt. They do not have the foreign exchange to pay not only the interest on external loans but also to repay loan principals. This is very important because it proves that if these countries were extremely soft, that is interest-free, these countries still would be unable to settle their debt. In other words, it did not pay for them to borrow at very soft terms.

In conclusion, our impression is that it does not pay for developing countries to borrow even at soft terms. Only private enterprises, run strictly along the lines of market forces, may afford to do so. In the long run and in terms of net outcome, it may be better to postpone a project, especially a public one, until it is financed from national savings rather than borrow to implement it right now.

What about borrowing at soft terms and re-lending the borrowed funds at higher rates? Well, that is OK. But this is a one-shot business because you do not find constant lenders. However, if you find them, this will not be borrowing but merely financial intermediation.

Benazir Bhutto ready to do battle

By Sharon Herbaugh
The Associated Press

ISLAMABAD — Benazir Bhutto says she is ready to do battle with the political and legal troubles that accompanied her dismissal as prime minister.

After her election defeat in October, opponents and some supporters predicted she would move to Britain or the United States and try to rebuild a career shattered by charges of corruption, misconduct and incompetence.

In her autobiography, "Daughter of the East," Ms. Bhutto wrote of the grief-stricken young woman who went into exile after her father, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was overthrown and hanged. Years later, she returned triumphantly and became the first woman to lead a modern Muslim nation.

This time, the 37-year-old former prime minister says she will fight on her home turf.

"I have no desire to live abroad," she said in an interview. "I want to live in my own country, come what may."

"I certainly plan to go abroad, not once but several times a year, but I certainly don't intend to go into exile. I denied it, and yet stories are fed to the press that I'm planning to go abroad and bargaining for the release of my husband."

Asif Ali Zardari, a flamboyant businessman who became Ms. Bhutto's husband in a December 1987 wedding arranged by her mother, has been blamed for the political downfall of his wife and her Pakistan People's Party.

Zardari, 38, and a member of parliament, has been jailed in Karachi since early October for alleged involvement in the kidnapping and extortion of a British businessman. He has yet to be formally charged and has been denied bail twice.

doesn't mean that you can be intimidated."

When she is not attending her husband's court hearings, Ms. Bhutto is trying to rally party workers and going over the events that prompted President Ghulam Ishaq Khan to dismiss her government Aug. 6, after only 20 months in power.

Three months after the dismissal came a humiliating defeat in the elections. She still contends the vote was rigged, but gets little support for the view from independent observers.

"There has been a lot of time for reflection," she said. "Certainly, one has reflected to a great degree on the past and how things could have been done differently — although the nagging feeling remains that, even if things were done differently, the hostility and bias on the side of the establishment would still come out the same."

"He did not give us a chance to govern," and I believe that he will not give a chance to the new government to function. I was an outsider, but even (new Prime Minister) Nawaz Sharif, who is considered a blue-eyed boy of the establishment, is not being given a chance to rule. Even the cabinet was imposed on him by the president."

Ms. Bhutto faces eight charges of misconduct and abuse of power filed with special corruption tribunals. Many observers, supporters and critics believe she will be convicted and barred from politics for as long as seven years.

If that happens, the 39 other Pakistan People's Party members of the 217-seat national assembly will resign. They have given their letters of resignation to Ms. Bhutto.

"It is up to the government to decide whether it wants the fulcrum of the opposition inside the parliament or outside it," she said.

'There has been a lot of time for reflection. Certainly, one has reflected to a great degree on the past and how things could have been done differently — although the nagging feeling remains that, even if things were done differently, the hostility and bias on the side of the president was so great that would still come out the same.'

Associates say the emotional strain of her husband's confinement has taken a toll on Ms. Bhutto. They have a 2-year-old son and a daughter 11 months old.

If her record of the past decade is an indication, Ms. Bhutto will confront her detractors rather than leave politics.

With her family life at stake and proposed legislation to make death by hanging the penalty for kidnapping, however, Western diplomats and some associates say Ms. Bhutto's priority is getting Zardari released.

"I am not bargaining for the release of my husband," she said in the interview. "My husband is an innocent person. He is in jail because he happens to be my husband. He is seen as a convenient weapon by which to blackmail and pressure me."

"I proposed to him in August that he should go abroad because they were bound to imprison him, but he refused. He has always tried to cheer me up and says, 'don't worry.' Of course I'm worried, but being worried doesn't mean you change your commitment. I was also worried when my father was in jail, but it

"If they think they can silence the voice of the people by disqualifying the leader of the opposition, then fine. Parliament will have no legitimacy. And if the parliament has no legitimacy, then the government will also have no legitimacy."

Many diplomats and associates say Ms. Bhutto is too preoccupied with legal problems, both her own and those of her husband, to be the strong opposition leader Pakistan needs.

They contend she still has not learned from her mistakes, come to grips with election defeat or been able to galvanize the Pakistan People's Party, once Pakistan's most progressive political force.

Ms. Bhutto denies all that and says she will fight for electoral reform, human rights and helping democracy take root in a country that has spent more than half its 45 years under military rule.

"As I have seen in my life, changes do come about," she said. "What is important is to keep your commitment and fight for principles."

I have passed through many difficult periods... and this is not the worst time for me."

Inside look at American public opinion

Following are some of the issues and questions that Americans are currently thinking about, and what they are thinking about them, as reflected in recent public opinion surveys. The polls are from data compiled by The Rooper Centre for Public Opinion at the University of Connecticut.

Top goal in Gulf: Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. Three national polling organisations recently asked Americans what they think the nation's goal should be in resolving the Gulf crisis, and how it could be reached. Getting Iraqi forces out of Kuwait by any means was favoured by a large majority, and almost as large a group said economic sanctions would not do it, but opinion was much more closely divided on whether that meant military action after Jan. 15, or giving sanctions more time to work. All three pollsters — the Gallup Organisation, ABC News, and CBS News/New York Times — conducted telephone interviews with adults across the nation, in samplings ranging from 500 to about 1,100, within the same six-day period in the first half of December. Here are some of their findings:

Do you agree or disagree that the United States should take all action necessary, including the use of military force, to make sure that Iraq withdraws its forces from Kuwait?

Agree — 65 per cent.
Disagree — 31 per cent.
Don't know/No opinion — 3 per cent.

If Iraq agreed to withdraw from most of Kuwait but not all of it, do you think the United States should accept that, or not?

Yes — 35 per cent.
No — 59 per cent.
Don't know/No opinion — 6 per cent.

Suppose Iraq withdraws from Kuwait, the former government is restored — and later the Arab countries work out an agreement to meet some of Iraq's demands for territory. Would you see this as a success or a failure for U.S. policy?

Success — 66 per cent.
Failure — 21 per cent.
Don't know — 13 per cent.

Even if Iraq withdraws from Kuwait, should the United States take military action to eliminate Saddam Hussein's war-making capability, or Saddam Hussein himself, or both, or neither?

War-making capability — 9 per cent.
Saddam Hussein himself — 9 per cent.
Both — 21 per cent.
Neither — 53 per cent.
Don't know — 8 per cent.

Most of the world's countries are participating in an economic boycott of Iraq. The boycott is designed to put economic pressure on Iraq so that it will withdraw from Kuwait. Do you think the economic boycott will make Iraq withdraw from Kuwait or not?

Yes, will make Iraq withdraw 38 — per cent.
No, will not make Iraq withdraw — 59 per cent.
Don't know/No opinion — 3 per cent.

The United Nations has passed a resolution authorising the use of military force against Iraq if they do not withdraw their troops from Kuwait by then, do you think the United States should start military actions against Iraq, or should the United States wait longer to see if the trade embargo and other economic sanctions work?

Start actions — 45 per cent.
Wait to see — 48 per cent.
Don't know/No answer — 7 per cent.

Bush decision right: no compromise with Saddam Hussein. CBS News/New York Times pollsters also asked a few questions about how the respondents felt the Bush administration has handled the Gulf crisis — and where it should go from here. The strong answer seemed to be: it was right to send troops, and it is right to continue insisting on complete Iraqi withdrawal. Less were sure of the policy's implementation and explanation.

Do you think the United States did the right thing in sending troops to Saudi Arabia, or should we have stayed out?

Right thing — 62 per cent.
Stayed out — 30 per cent.
Don't know/No answer — 8 per cent.

In its dealings with the Middle East, do you think the Bush administration has tried hard enough to reach diplomatic solutions, or has it been too quick to get American military forces involved?

Tried hard enough — 44 per cent.
Too quick to get military involved — 43 per cent.
Don't know/No answer — 13 per cent.

Do you think George Bush has explained the situation in the Middle East well enough so that you feel you understand why the United States is sending troops to Saudi Arabia, or hasn't he?

Explained clearly — 52 per cent.
Not explained clearly — 44 per cent.
Don't know/No answer — 4 per cent.

Do you think the United States should be willing to negotiate a compromise with Saddam Hussein about how to solve the situation in the Gulf, or do you think the United States should stick to its original demand that Iraq leave Kuwait entirely?

Negotiate — 29 per cent.
Stick to demand — 62 per cent.
Don't know/No answer — 9 per cent.

Chemical, nuclear, biological weapons a major concern. Gallup asked its interviewees what they thought would be sufficient reason for going to war with Iraq. Many said an Iraqi threat of chemical or biological warfare or development of nuclear weapon would be the strongest justification; lowering oil prices got the lowest support as a justification. This was the multiple question and the responses were:

I'm going to read to you some reasons people give for going to war against Iraq. Please tell us whether you think each is a good reason for the United States to go to war against Iraq or whether it is not a good reason to go to war.

To lower oil prices
Good reason — 31 per cent.
Not a good reason — 66 per cent.
Don't know — 3 per cent.

To prevent Saddam Hussein from developing nuclear weapons.
Good reason — 70 per cent.
Not a good reason — 26 per cent.
Don't know — 4 per cent.

To prevent Saddam Hussein from threatening the area with chemical and biological weapons.
Good Reason — 78 per cent.
Not a good reason — 20 per cent.
Don't know — 2 per cent.

To prevent Iraq from controlling a larger share of Mideast oil and threatening the U.S. economy. (USIS)

King

(Continued from page 1)

visit several other European capitals, including Luxembourg, Paris and Rome, but the exact itinerary would be finalised after his talks in London.

The King's renewed diplomacy comes ahead of a Jan. 15 deadline set by the U.N. Security Council for Iraq to relinquish Iraq or face war.

Iraq, which has rejected the council's resolutions calling for its withdrawal from Kuwait, has said it does not recognise the deadline and declared instead that it remained open for "serious, in-depth negotiations" over all problems of the Middle East, with priority for the Palestinian problem.

The U.S. has ruled out "negotiations" with Iraq and says that the only aim of its proposal for direct contacts with Baghdad is to reaffirm its demand for Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait.

According to the senior official, Jordan believes that the key to resolving the crisis lies on two parallel fronts which should be followed simultaneously.

"One is an American-Iraqi dialogue and the other is an Arab-Arab dialogue," the official told the Jordan Times.

Efforts for a U.S.-Iraq dialogue are deadlocked over conflicting positions by Washington and Iraq over the date for a visit to the Iraqi capital by American Secretary of State James Baker.

This is an area where the EC could play a significant role by exerting efforts with both sides to break the stalemate and "bring out a serious dialogue," says another Jordanian official.

Jacques Poos, the foreign minister of Luxembourg which assumed the rotating EC presidency Tuesday, said Monday that Friday's EC meeting might decide to send him to Baghdad to initiate EC-Iraqi contacts.

While signs have emerged of a serious contemplation in Europe over the catastrophic consequences of war in the Gulf, there has been little indication of the EC states breaking away from the American-led anti-Iraq coalition.

Iraq has welcomed European mediation effort, as Baghdad's Ambassador to Washington, Mohammad Sa'ed Al Mofarreh put it, "as long as the Europeans are not subservient to American policy... and see that their interests are not linked to the American new imperialist design."

On the Arab front, the Jordanian official explained, the most significant element of Arab-Arab dialogue is a meeting between Saudi Arabia's King Fahd and Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Benjedid, the Algerian president, visited Arah and European capitals last month in a bid to realise a Fahd-Saddam summit but made little headway after an initial Saudi enthusiasm appeared to have faded.

"Not only Jordan but also several other Arab countries are still confident that a Saudi-Iraqi summit would serve as the key to open the deadlock and defuse the tension in the Gulf," the Jordanian official said.

Messages of support

Chile, meanwhile, sent a message of support for the King's efforts.

The message, sent by President Patricio Aylwin Azocar,

said Chile appreciated the King's "continuous work... and valuable efforts and initiatives to reach just and long-lasting peace in the region" and wished the mission "far-reaching success."

Jamal Sbaer, a Jordanian political activist and head of the Arab Democratic Unionist Grouping, Tuesday sent a message of support for the King's efforts.

"You will be conveying during your European visit the complete confidence and trust of the Jordanian people in you," the message said. "You will be speaking in the name of the whole Arab Nation," it said.

"Yes to an Arab solution which is in harmony with Arab national aspirations or let it be the historic battle between the Arab Nation and the starting point of an Arab renaissance on the basis of sacrifices and martyrdom," the message added.

Base

(Continued from page 1)

the Jordanian economy and grappling with its problems over the past two years. These include Finance Minister Basel Jaradneh, Minister of Industry and Trade Ziad Fariz and Minister of Supply Ibrahim Ayyoub in addition to Planning Minister Khaled Amin Abdullah, who was brought into the cabinet in mid-1990.

Two other key cabinet members, Interior Minister Salem Masa'adeh and Information Minister Ibrahim Ezzedine, who have played central roles in the gradual democratisation process by implementing reforms through their respective ministries also remain in the Badran cabinet.

Badran

(Continued from page 1)

legitimate struggle against Israeli occupation.

"We in Jordan pledge to share water, air and bread until we achieve victory," he said.

Other speakers at the rally included Salah Khalaf, member of the Central Committee of the mainstream Palestinian faction Fateh, Palestinian Ambassador Al Tayyeb Abdul Rahim and Mamdoub Al Abadi, chairman of the Jordanian popular committee for supporting the Palestinian uprising.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein urged the Palestinians Tuesday to persevere and fight "the infidels and their agents" in the occupied territories and elsewhere in the world.

Saddam's remarks came in a message he sent to Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat on the anniversary of the Palestinian revolution, the Iraqi News Agency said.

"The banner of holy jihad is being raised by the Arab and Islamic nation all over the world in defence of justice, right, dignity, and the noble Arab and Islamic values," Saddam said.

Jihad "is the path of the patient warriors who have confidence in victory and who defend the land of the Arab and Islamic sanctities against the tyrannical Satan that is desecrating a part of Arab land, playing havoc on this land, spreading corruption, and threatening the sources of enlightenment," Saddam said referring to the Israeli occupation of Arab territories and the presence of U.S.-led multinational forces in the Gulf.

Saddam

(Continued from page 1)

Kuwait and along the Saudi Arabia border arrayed against the U.S.-led multinational forces sent in response to Baghdad's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait.

In his New Year's eve remarks recorded by Iraqi television, Saddam accused Fahd of refusing financial assistance to Iraq, Palestinians and other poor Arabs.

But he said the king was giving billions of dollars to the United States and others to launch an attack against Iraq.

"The Americans are milking them in Haifa Al Batin (a northern Saudi military outpost) and will force them to pay until the Saudi wealth is depleted," Saddam said.

He said he read in newspapers that Saudi Arabia had so far paid out \$37 billion for military assistance.

"Iraq's men, children and women will not be defeated and they will fight, and fight on until God decides" when to stop, Saddam said.

He said Kuwait was part of Iraq's "body and soul, which has been chopped off and made a centre of sabotage against Iraq."

"We will never accept that any longer," the Iraqi president said. Earlier Tuesday, Iraq rejected a peace appeal by Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak and branded him a clown and a liar.

Mubarak, in a chilling New Year message to Iraq, said "we are approaching a merciless inferno" and declared:

"Heads will turn white, cities will collapse and the mutilated bodies of victims will be scattered in seas of blood."

But Iraq responded by insisting it would stay in Kuwait and would not be intimidated by the U.S.-led military buildup in the Gulf.

The Iraqi News Agency (INA) denounced Mubarak, a leading Arab member of the anti-Arab alliance, as "a clown and a liar" playing a sly role on behalf of U.S. President George Bush.

"We tell lightheaded Hosni, that unlike him and his advisers, we are not ones to be intimidated by navies and hollow words from sick minds," the agency said.

"The crocodile tears shed by Hosni for those of us who fall as martyrs are to no avail," INA said, declaring that Kuwait was Iraq's 19th province and that the "corrupting Al Sabah family (of exiled rulers) is gone forever."

President Bush and Soviet President Gorbachev condemned Iraq's takeover of Kuwait in New Year greetings beamed to each other's peoples.

Busb called the invasion "brutal aggression" and Gorbachev labelled it a threat to "the advance towards a peaceful period of civilisation."

In southwestern Saudi Arabia U.S. Vice President Dan Quayle stressed battle-readiness as he met with U.S. pilots and sailors whose New Year holds the prospect of war.

"Happy New Year," he told the troops. "Last year, 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. This year, Saddam Hussein will leave Kuwait."

"We are ready, willing and able to do what needs to be done," Quayle told a group.

Before heading back to Washington late Tuesday, Quayle also met with the deposed emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al Sabah, who is now staying in the Saudi Arabian city of Taif.

Quayle told him, as he informed King Fahd Sunday, that more money is needed from U.S. allies to help support the U.S. military effort in the Gulf, administration officials said, adding that the emir had no objections to Quayle's request for greater financial backing.

Iraq said Tuesday its forces will launch month-long manoeuvres in western provinces in mid-January, coinciding with the U.N. deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait or risk a U.S.-led military onslaught.

The official Islamic Republic News Agency (INA) said the drills were scheduled for mid-January. Tehran Radio said only that they will begin in the last 10 days of the Persian month of Dey, which ends on Jan. 10.

IRNA quoted Gholamali Rashid, a spokesman for the general command of the armed forces, as saying the operation will be the largest ever to be held jointly by the air force, army, Revolutionary Guards Corps and volunteers known as "basij."

He did not say how many personnel will take part but noted that "live ammunition and new arms will be used."

The manoeuvres will last for one month in the border provinces of Khuzestan, Ilam and Bakhtaran, covering an area of 15,000 square kilometres, Rashid said.



Afghan rebels display a variety of weapons they use as they pose around a truck in an Afghan village.

Afghan rivals may be squeezed by chief sponsors

By John Jennings
Reuter

PESHAWAR, Pakistan. — Afghanistan's President Najibullah and the Mujahideen guerrillas battling to topple him from power may be squeezed by their chief sponsors into ending the war.

The Soviet Union and the United States want out of a 12-year conflict left over from the cold war and could turn off the flow of weapons.

In Houston this month, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze failed to announce a widely expected formula for a political settlement.

But most elements of a deal are agreed and Shevardnadze told reporters: "We also support a ceasefire and a cutoff in arms deliveries."

The U.S. Congress recently cut weapons and other aid to the guerrillas by about \$50 million or 10 per cent for 1991.

With the cold war over, the Soviet Union and the United States are keen to be rid of the Afghanistan problem without being seen to betray their clients, officials from both sides say.

But are their proxies ready to accept anything agreed in Washington or Moscow?

Maybe, says Najibullah. No, if Najibullah does not step down, say the Mujahideen and their Pakistani supporters.

Signs that Moscow and Washington are getting close to a deal have touched off a flurry of diplomatic and political activity from Najibullah and renewed efforts by the Mujahideen to plaster over the cracks in their ranks.

Najibullah flew to Geneva unexpectedly last month for talks with representatives of deposed King Zahir Shah. According to some diplomats he also met a moderate guerrilla leader.

Recent months have also seen desperate efforts by Afghan guerrilla leaders, with the aid of their U.S. and Pakistani supporters, to boost their battlefield performance.

One Western diplomat said guerrillas and their supporters were "hopeful, but not necessarily optimistic" that they could seize the military initiative from Najibullah's forces during the coming winter months.

U.S. officials hope the guerrillas will press harder on the battlefield. This in turn may nudge Moscow into giving ground in talks between the superpowers.

With snow already on the mountains of the Hindu Kush, the ability of the guerrillas to mount large operations is severely hampered and most fighting is likely to be restricted to lower lying eastern provinces and southern regions.

Guerrilla commanders from all over Afghanistan met on the Afghan-Pakistan border in October to plan a new military strategy.

But harsh weather, uneven supplies and a decade of internal feuding would have to be overcome for the guerrillas to make headway.

"It is important to remember that with only a few exceptions, during the entire history of the war there has been very little Mujahideen activity over the winter," a Western diplomat said in an interview.

"There are good prospects for some action but it is unrealistic to expect significant action before the thaw."

The problems for the guerrillas are thorniest in the north. Ahmad Shah Masood, the single most powerful Mujahideen leader in the north, could cut the Salang highway, Kabul's lifeline with the Soviet Union.

But keeping the road closed would be very costly in lives and ammunition. Snow blocks Masood's own supply routes across the Hindu Kush from now until June, and his enemies include other guerrillas as well as regime troops.

Masood recently made peace with the Pakistan Inter-Services

Intelligence directorate, which controls arms distribution among the guerrillas, after years of hostility.

ISI officials, angry at Masood's refusal to do their bidding, for years gave the lion's share of arms to arch-rival Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and his extremist Hezb-I-Islami.

Masood's people in Peshawar say that has changed since he visited Pakistan in October for the first time since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. During the trip he met Pakistan Army Chief General Mirza Aslam Beg and ISI Director General Asad Durrani.

The Masood-Hekmatyar feud is perhaps the most serious of the countless squabbles which divide the guerrilla forces.

Guerrillas and diplomats complain that while ISI may have changed its mind about Masood it has not changed its support for Hekmatyar.

Throughout the second half of November, Hekmatyar released daily reports of advances around Kabul, but few were corroborated.

At the end of November Hezb said they had captured Mohammad Agha, a district headquarters south of Kabul. The next day the Kabul government took journalists on a tour of the post to prove it was still in their hands.

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The Masood-Hekmatyar feud is perhaps the most serious of the countless squabbles which divide the guerrilla forces.

Guerrillas and diplomats complain that while ISI may have changed its mind about Masood it has not changed its support for Hekmatyar.

Throughout the second half of November, Hekmatyar released daily reports of advances around Kabul, but few were corroborated.

At the end of November Hezb said they had captured Mohammad Agha, a district headquarters south of Kabul. The next day the Kabul government took journalists on a tour of the post to prove it was still in their hands.

Masood recently made peace with the Pakistan Inter-Services

Noriega, America's most famous PoW, awaits trial

By Jeanne Dequine
Reuter

MIAMI. — Deposed Panamanian strongman Manuel Noriega, the most famous prisoner of war in the United States, has spent the past year in jail peddling an exercise bicycle and preparing for his trial on drug trafficking charges.

Noriega, 56, is due to stand trial on Jan. 23, following this month's anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Panama that led to his capture.

The former central American general was on the U.S. government's payroll for decades as an

intelligence source and his case is politically sensitive. Some legal experts say it has implications for President George Bush, who headed the Central Intelligence Agency in the 1970s.

Noriega is also alleged to have protected U.S.-bound shipments of cocaine for Colombia's Medellin cartel, according to prosecutors.

Since his capture by U.S. troops, Noriega has had some \$20 million in European bank accounts frozen and been declared a prisoner of war by a U.S. judge, a status that entitles him to a U.S.-paid salary of \$59 per month.

He also faces a separate

Miami lawsuit filed by the Panamanian government for \$6.5 billion in civil damages.

Lawyers for Noriega hope to get the U.S. drug trafficking charges dismissed, claiming his constitutional rights were violated by the government's tape recordings of private conversations with his defence team.

"I had no idea the government would stoop this low," said Noriega's flamboyant attorney, Frank Rubino.

Some legal scholars and politicians have suggested the tape recordings may have been a deliberate attempt by agencies within the government to sabot-

age the case.

Prosecutors, who decline to discuss the case, have acknowledged in court filings that the government monitored more than 1,400 telephone calls made by Noriega because the inmate failed to indicate to guards that the calls were private.

Several taped conversations were passed on to Cable News Network and broadcast on television.

The Panamanian government has acknowledged receiving copies of the taped conversations, many of which could be interpreted as attempts to transfer money out of accounts.

The tape recordings were

made at the federal prison in Miami. There, Noriega was given a special three-room cell nicknamed the "dictator's suite", equipped within exercise bicycle, computers, paper shredder and safe with an alarm system.

Noriega, the first leader of a foreign government to be tried in the United States, was condemned by diplomats after his capture as a narcotics terrorist, murderer and collector of pornography.

Some lawyers have argued that Noriega should be tried in Panama, not the United States.

"This is a quarrel between the

Panamanian government and its former military leader over spoils of office that have characterised military dominance over Central American government from time immemorial," said Charles Maechling, an expert on international law at the Brookings Institution.

"Don't lay this additional burden on the American taxpayer."

Before the trial can begin, Miami Judge William Hoeveler must resolve Noriega's claim that he is penniless and cannot pay his lawyers because the U.S. government froze his funds in international accounts in France, Austria and Switzerland.

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Liverpool starts new year with 3-0 victory over Leeds

LONDON (R) — Liverpool bounced back from Sunday's surprise defeat at Crystal Palace to beat fourth-placed Leeds 3-0 Anfield Tuesday, ending their opponents' 14-match unbeaten streak and ensuring they remained top of the league.

The champions cast aside a recent run of poor performances which saw them lose twice and drop light points in December to start the New Year in style.

Kicking off three hours ahead of the rest of the first division, Liverpool stretched their lead over second-placed Arsenal, who were due to play Manchester City, to four points.

Goals from John Barnes and Ronny Rosenthal in the first half ended any hopes promoted Leeds had of extending an im-

pressive run and moving to within three points of the leaders.

Liverpool dominated the first league meeting between the old rivals for almost nine years and Ian Rush, who scored two goals in a 3-0 win when the sides last met at Anfield in 1981, completed the scoring in the final minute.

England international Barnes gave Liverpool a great start with his eighth goal of the season in the seventh minute, steering home a David Burrows cross.

Rosenthal, playing in place of the injured Peter Beardsley, made it 2-0 with his fourth goal of the season after 33 minutes.

Liverpool, whose stuttering form in December saw their lead shrink from eight points to one

as they lost at Arsenal and Crystal Palace, produced a performance which showed they are anything but a fading force.

Liverpool suffered their second league defeat of the season Sunday when they went down 1-0 at Crystal Palace.

Palace's long-haul game consistently frustrated Liverpool and allowed strikers Mark Bright and Ian Wright to pressure Liverpool goalkeeper Bruce Grobbelaar.

Bright scored the winning goal, his 11th of the season, in the 42nd minute when he diverted a cross from Wright between the legs of the hapless Grobbelaar.

The South African-born keeper has now let in four goals

in three games.

Liverpool fought back after the interval, with John Barnes creating the best breaks, but never managed to dominate an inventive Palace side.

Palace manager Steve Coppell watched on contentedly. After six years as manager, Coppell signed his first-ever contract with the club just before the match.

In Saturday's main league programme Arsenal trounced Sheffield United 4-1 and Leeds briefly took Palace's number three spot after beating Wimbledon 3-0.

Latest London betting Sunday makes Liverpool 2-1 on to retain the title with Arsenal 2-1 against, Leeds at 16-1 and Palace at 20-1.

Vialli comeback gives Sampdoria share of lead

ROME (R) — Gianluca Vialli, the fallen idol of Italian soccer, has made a blistering comeback to end Internazionale's two-month unbeaten run and put Sampdoria back at the top of the Italian League table after a 3-1 victory.

Vialli, dropped from the national team less than a fortnight ago, scored two of Sampdoria's three goals, the first coming just 23 seconds into the game.

Inter again failed to take advantage of an opposing team down to 10 men, although they stay joint first division leaders with Sampdoria.

Also back on winning form was AC Milan's Dutch international Ruud Gullit who scored the second goal in the 2-0 victory over Juventus which lifted Milan

from fourth to third spot.

League champions Napoli, without captain Diego Maradona, could only manage a goalless draw against lowly Cesena and stay ninth in the 18-team league.

The last game of the year could not have presented more eloquently the case for Vialli's return to the Italian national team.

His exclusion against Cyprus in a European Championship qualifier eight days ago was the first time he had been left out, while still fit, for over five years.

In the opening minute he connected with a cross to put Sampdoria ahead. Twenty minutes later he had the ball in the net again but was judged to have fouled Inter defender Antonio Paganin and the goal was disallowed.

Top seeds advance in Danone Open

BRISBANE, Australia (AP) — Jana Novotna beat German teenager Marketa Kochta in straight sets Tuesday in the second round of the \$150,000 Danone Open and said she's in the best shape of her career.

The top-seeded Czech player crushed 15-year-old Kochta 6-2, 6-1 with an impressive display of controlled power.

She was joined in the last 16 by her compatriot and former doubles partner, no. 2-seeded Helena Sukova, who cruised to a 6-2, 6-3 second-round win over Australian Michelle Jaggard.

"I've been in better shape," said Novotna, who now is coached by former French Open champion Hana Mandlikova.

She said Kochta had given her a tough struggle. "I don't think the scoreline was a good reflection of match," she said.

Sukova's world ranking has dropped to 14th after a disappointing 1990 and she said she was aiming to earn a spot in the top five by the end of the year.

"I haven't forgotten how to hit the ball, but I do need to regain the confidence that wins you big matches," she said.

Gretchen Magers of the United States, seeded seventh, had to struggle before beating gritty Japanese player Tamaka Takagi 6-4, 1-6, 6-3 in another second-round match.

No. 10 Julie Halard of France also progressed with a 7-5, 6-3 win over Nana Miyagi of Japan and earned a round of 16 meeting with Sukova.

Maya Kidowaki of Japan was the fifth player to advance to the

last 16, heating Australian teenager Kirrily Sharpe 3-6, 6-2, 6-2. Sharpe beat no. 11 seed Patty Fendick Monday.

American Stacey Martin upset powerful no. 12 seed Brenda Schultz of the Netherlands 6-4, 6-0, in a first-round match.

Martin defused Schultz's big serve and outslugged her with some impressive groundstrokes.

"There are a lot of big girls out there. You can't let them intimidate you," Martin said.

In other first-round action, no. 9 Rachel McQuillan of Australia, no. 15 Veronika Martinek of Germany and no. 16 Natalia Medvedeva of the Soviet Union all progressed.

McQuillan crushed Soviet qualifier Victoria Milvidskaja 6-0, 6-2, while Czech-born baseliner Martinek was too steady for Alexia Dechaume of France, winning 6-4, 6-3.

Medvedeva rallied to defeat South African Elna Reinach 3-6, 6-1, 6-4.

The tournament is being played on synthetic rebound ace courts and continues through Sunday.

It is one of a series of warm-up events for the Australian Open, which begins on Jan. 14 at the National Tennis Centre in Melbourne.

Australia has produced a succession of top-line women tennis players, including Margaret Court, Evonne Goolagong-Cawley and Wendy Turnbull.

McQuillan, a feisty 19-year-old baseliner who is Australia's current no. 1 woman player, aims to be next.

Larsson eliminates Becker from Adelaide championship

ADELAIDE, Australia (AP) — Magnus Larsson stunned top-seeded Boris Becker Tuesday, eliminating the three-time Wimbledon champion from the first round of the Australian Hardcourt Tennis Championships.

Larsson, a tall 20-year-old from Vaxjo, Sweden, defeated Becker 6-4, 3-6, 7-6 (7-2). It was Becker's first loss in the first round of a tournament since he was beaten by Goran Ivanisevic of Yugoslavia in last year's French Open.

Larsson surprised Becker in the first set, breaking the German's opening service game and holding on to take the set 6-4.

Becker captured the second set, but Larsson kept his nerve in the decisive final set tiebreaker as Becker made a succession of unforced errors.

"Nobody expects to win against Boris Becker," Larsson said. "I was a bit lucky on the important points."

The Swede said he's played better "but not against such a good player."

Becker was disappointed by the outcome, but wasn't critical of his own performance. He said

Larsson put him under pressure throughout the match.

"From the beginning to the end he took his chances," Becker said. "He hit the ball very hard all the time and often found the lines. I wouldn't say I played badly. I haven't played a match for a while. To close 7-6 in the third — the difference is one shot, one point."

Becker was using the tournament to prepare for the Australian Open, which begins on Jan. 14 Melbourne. He now is expected to ask for a wild card entry into next week's New South Wales Open in Sydney.

"I was hoping to get a couple of matches here," said Becker, who never has made it past the quarterfinals of the Australian Open. "I'll decide what to do over the next couple of days."

Earlier Tuesday, under a blazing midday sun, Austrian Horst Skoff stormed off court, defaulting his first-round match against Jimmy Arias of Jericho, N.Y.

Skoff, seeded third and ranked 26th in the world, trailed Arias 7-6 (7-4) and 3-0 when the 100-degree (38-degree Celsius) heat got to him.

Last charge for German swimmer

PERTH, Australia (R) — Michael Gross welcomed in the New Year looking forward to his last charge for a unique World Swimming Championship record in a newly-united German team.

At 26, Gross returns after more than two years' absence from international competition to make the farewell appearance in one of swimming's greatest careers.

In a situation unthinkable when he temporarily quit after collecting his third Olympic title all-told at the 1988 Seoul games, he now finds himself the focus of a German team uniting the West with the East.

"To me to compete for a unified German team in my last meeting is just luck. No one would have expected it a year ago," he said Tuesday at the Perth Superdome where the championships unfold from Jan. 3 to 13.

"For me it is really important to swim for a unified German team."

Symbolising the new German realities, the West's Gross was seated at a news conference next to Manuela Stellmach, who won the European 200 metres freestyle title for East Germany.

Stellmach won the 200 freestyle silver medal at the last World Championships in Madrid in 1986 when Gross repeated a rare golden double over 200 freestyle and 200 butterfly.

Gross, who had won the two events in Guayaquil, Ecuador, on his World Championship debut in 1982, is swimming just hutterly this time, aiming for an unprecedented third successive triumph in one individual event.

While Stellmach was winning gold at the 1989 European Championships in Bonn, Gross restricted himself to a spectator's role as commentator for a newspaper.

"To be a spectator is nice but to be a swimmer is better. It's good to be back in the water for these championships," he said.

"The break gives back motivation. If I'd trained through to '91

perhaps I'd have been burned out too, physically."

Gross produced top times in November's all-German championships despite illness. "I was really ill during the trials with tonsillitis," he said.

"Besides that, training went really well. I'm feeling not bad."

There was time for New Year's celebrations before the team, uniting former deadly rivals, got down to the serious business of competition.

"Every party helps another step to getting to know one another," Gross said.

Gross, championing the cause

of keeping drugs out of the sport, said Tuesday that with random dope testing Germany had a bright future in the sport.

Gross said allegations that drugs had been used to enhance performance in former Communist East Germany were not a problem for the new, unified German team at the World Championships.

"I think there's no problem at all. We have tests in training. I tested two days before Christmas — an unexpected (random) test — so there is no problem with it at all," he told reporters before the championships beginning Thursday.



Al Ahli beats Al Orthodoxy

AMMAN (J.T.) — Al Ahli basketball team defeated Al Orthodoxy Club Sunday night 86-74 to win the kingdom's 1990 Basketball Championship.

The game was at Al Hussein Youth City under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Faisal bin Al Hussein and was attended by Her Royal Highness Princess Abla Al Faisal, His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi bin Mohammad and several presidents of the Jordanian Sports Federations. The photo shows Nasser Bushnaq of Al Ahli (in white) putting the ball into Al Orthodoxy ring. (Photo by Abdullah Ayyoub).

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAH HIRSCH
1990 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q.1—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ 7 ♠ 542 ♠ A10 ♠ A986542
As dealer, what action do you take?

Q.2—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ 542 ♠ A10 ♠ A986542
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
Pass Pass 1 ♠ Pass
What action do you take?

Q.3—East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ 7 ♠ 542 ♠ A10 ♠ A986542
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
Pass Pass 1 ♠ Pass
What action do you take?

Q.4—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ KJ9 ♠ Q10943 ♠ J52 ♠ 108
Partner opens the bidding with one heart. What do you respond?

Q.5—Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ Void ♠ KJ43 ♠ KQ7 ♠ KQJ64
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ ?
What action do you take?

Q.6—Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
♠ A952 ♠ AJ ♠ KQ63 ♠ K43
The bidding has proceeded:
South West North East
1 NT 2 ♠ Pass
What action do you take?

Mutt'n'Jeff



Andy Capp



Peanuts



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY JANUARY 2, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: A day to review attitude toward your own country and to consider your options on any civic venture or undertaking that can bring you the good will of those in authority.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Whatever you have in mind that can cause trouble in anyway should be avoided, then you can forge ahead in whatever new avenues of expression are.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You have odd ideas that will get you nowhere but fast this morning but later everything becomes better for you and you are able to make things correct.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) A day to avoid any sort of argument with an associate in the morning but as the day advances everyone is in a cooperative mood.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) This is the day for you first to get obnoxious tasks behind you, then you are able to get off and enjoy yourself with good friends.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You now find whatever you do in the morning costs more than its worth or you can afford but in the evening everything breaks in your favor.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) This is the moment when you need to be most sure you say and do nothing at home early that

could upset or disturb members of your household.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is one day to make no side remarks or you later get in trouble but this is the time for communications, visits or calls to others.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You now have it in your power to get more money, from what you start this afternoon and evening, although the day finds your judgment pretty good.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Your day is to be very social after which you would be wise by getting your health and charm improved by the treatment of others.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) There are some pretty ingenious arrangements you can make for those who are having a difficult time and look to you for help to give.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Take time out to meet with friends and acquaintances of an intimate nature tonight after thinking out what you really want personally.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) The most clever higher-up you know needs to be contacted today to help you solve your problems of an outside nature so be on the lookout.

THE BETTER HALF

By Harris



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

THYAS
PEALL
SWEFFT
LIPOCE



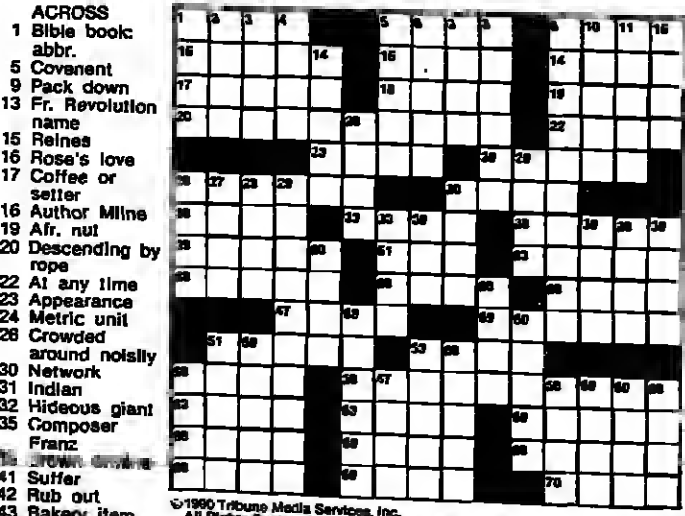
Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: "O O O O O YOUR O O O O O!"

Saturday's Jumble: BEIGE FEVER SCHOOL FIERCE
Answer: Those noisy neighbors thought they were enjoying the right of -- FREE SCREECH!

THE Daily Crossword

By Evelyn Benshoof



1 Bible book: abbr.
2 Covenant
3 Pack down
4 Fr. Revolution name
5 Reineke
6 Rose's love
7 Coffee or setter
8 Author Milne
9 Air, not
10 Descending by rope
11 At any time
12 Appearance
13 Metric unit
14 Crowded around noisily
15 Network
16 Indian
17 Hideous giant
18 Composer
19 Franz
20 Suffer
21 Rub out
22 Bakery item
23 Lane
24 Song
25 Tractable
26 Attraction
27 Yellow
28 pigment
29 Part of a casa
30 Repugnant
31 Summons
32 good luck
33 Winglike
34 Pluck
35 "Res"
36 Antiochia
37 She: Fr.
38 Prebyter
39 Piffal
40 Active one
41 admonition
42 Down
43 Turk, title
44 A Roosevelt
45 Journey
46 Fastener
47 Norman
48 Vincent
49 Weary
50 Familial group
51 Snarl
52 Accept blame
53 Over
54 Track athlete
55 Base
56 Topic
57 U. resort
58 of Man
59 Largest part
60 Preminger
61 Insensitive one
62 Be acquitted
63 Oslive
64 Leveret
65 Wonderingly
66 River inlet
67 Part of
68 Earth
69 Unaligned
70 Mangle
71 Nimbus
72 Came together
73 Valvety cloth
74 Houston
75 Rolling plain
76 Barton or Bow
77 Wooden plug
78 Ryled flower
79 Stupendous
80 A Guthrie
81 Bell's plain
82 Church
83 Portent
84 Move quickly

Mongolia's crisis worsens

ULAN BATOR (R) — Mongolia, its fledgling free market economy in crisis, is facing serious problems supplying its two million people with everyday necessities.

As residents queued for hours to buy whatever food was available, President Punsalmaagyn Ochirbat declared that worse was to come.

"Looking at the present situation, the economic crisis is becoming more severe than expected," Ochirbat was quoted as saying in the ruling party newspaper Ulaan.

State income was expected to fall by 40 per cent in 1990, he said.

Mongolia, a vast country of steppes and mountain forests bordered by the Soviet Union and China, is facing serious problems just providing its population with basic necessities.

Recently cut off from financial and material support from its ideological "elder brother," the Soviet Union, after sweeping political changes in both countries, Mongolia is making its first steps towards a free market economy.

One legacy of seven decades of communism, however, is debt of almost 10 billion roubles (\$16 billion) to the Soviet Union.

Ochirbat, whose communist People's Revolutionary Party won Mongolia's first democratic elections last July, said shortages of petrol were affecting all production sectors following a reduction in supplies from the Soviet Union.

"It will be difficult to find a way out," he said.

Mongolia's workforce is disorganised, its work ethic is deteriorating, useless products are being made and productivity has fallen by almost 17 per cent in some sectors, Ochirbat was quoted as saying.

"People are getting nervous because of irregular services. Finding goods, as well as petrol, electricity and heating is more and more difficult," he added.

Even milk — in a country where livestock outnumber people several times over — is becoming a rarity because of transport problems.

Meat, eggs, soap and some medicines are also scarce.

"The whole day passes by in

finding food for a meal," a teacher complained as she queued for meat in the capital, Ulaan Bator.

Some provinces have already started rationing foodstuffs.

A foodstore in the town of Bayankhongor in southwest Mongolia could recently offer its 20,000 inhabitants only tinned fish, three packs of dried milk and a tray of old potatoes.

Food in the countryside is more abundant.

"We will never see famine," said a nomadic herdsman outside Bayankhongor in an isolated Gobi desert valley as he prepared meat and dried curd for rare guests in his yurt (tent).

"We don't get any vegetables here but there is always plenty of meat and milk," he noted.

His felt home has no electricity but because power cuts in town have led to a shortage of candles, his only light comes from the flames of burning animal dung.

Following traditional Mongolian hospitality, he poured his unexpected guests a spirit made from mare's milk and saw them off with a full canister for the journey home.

Merrill Lynch predicts bull market in summer

NEW YORK (R) — A U.S. bull market might begin in the second half of 1991 but stocks will stay under pressure until then, forecasters from Merrill Lynch and Co. Inc. have said.

The nation's economy probably began contracting over the summer and will continue to do so for at least the next six months, the researchers said in their annual economic outlook.

"We are in a period of great change, and it is creating much uncertainty," said Robert Farrell, the brokerage's chief market analyst. "Uncertainty spawns bear markets."

He said stock prices would

bottom out at levels 10 per cent to 15 per cent below their 1990 lows.

Inflation will fall to four per cent from six per cent currently, the Merrill analysts predicted, and oil prices will drop sharply.

The dollar, which has set record lows against the Deutsche mark last year, will continue to fall against foreign currencies for three to six months, they predicted.

The Merrill analysts said relief for the economy would come in the form of lower interest rates engineered by the Federal Reserve.

Egypt hikes air fares

CAIRO (R) — Egyptair raised air fares by up to eight per cent Tuesday, an official for the national airline said.

The cost of domestic, Middle East and African flights went up by six per cent, of Asian routes by seven per cent while fares for Europe and the United States went up by eight per cent, the official said.

Since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, most airlines have increased their fares to make up for rises in fuel prices and war insurance.

Last year, Egyptair raised air fares by 32 per cent.

Jordan enters uncertain '91 with optimism

By P.V. Vivekanand

AMMAN — Jordan has entered the new year with an economic legacy burdened by the heavy adverse impact of the Gulf crisis but putting up a brave face and with optimism that it can ride off the economic impact of the five-month-old problem as long as there is no military conflict in the region.

What a war could do to the Kingdom and the region is as unpredictable as anyone's guess. But short of that, everyone agrees that the Kingdom faces one of the most crucial periods in its history.

If war could totally undermine the delicate economic structure of the Kingdom, then any prolonged no-war-no-peace stand-off in the Gulf could be equally worse for Jordan, economists warn.

The Kingdom and its people have suffered heavily from the Gulf crisis and the international trade embargo imposed on Iraq.

An independent United Nations agency recently estimated the losses at \$8.3 billion in lost trade with Iraq and Kuwait, Arab financial assistance, savings and assets of expatriates, transit charges for Iraq-bound goods and expatriate remittances.

Jordan has sought compensation under article 50 of the United Nations charter which provides for special assistance to countries hit by adherence to mandatory Security Council resolutions.

Japan, Germany, Italy, Canada, France, Taiwan and the Netherlands are among countries which have extended assistance to the Kingdom in response to the request for compensation.

Part of the assistance, about \$250 million, has already been received or is in the pipeline in the form of outright grants and loans.

Further assistance is expected this year, particularly from the European Community (EC).

While a good part of the assistance is aimed at helping Jordan with its balance of payment, economists say that the aid might have to be appropriated to make up for shortfalls in the expected domestic revenues if the Gulf crisis lingers on, making Jordanians unable to meet their obligations to the domestic revenue.

Most analysts believe that the government would find it hard to realise the target of domestic revenues in the year 1991 as outlined in the budget.

"If the crisis lingers on, then there is little doubt that the government would find it impossible to meet the target of JD 700 million in domestic revenues," said Dr. Jawad Al Anani, an economic analyst and former minister.

"This would mean that most of the expected foreign assistance would have to be appropriated to make up for the shortfalls in domestic revenue," he told the Jordan Times.

Anani believes that changes will have to be made in the fiscal budget to accommodate the problem.

"I do not know how they are going to do it," he said. "But they will have to do it somehow."

But, Abdullah Malki, head of the Association of Jordanian Banks, is confident that external assistance would be forthcoming to even out the expected imbalance.

"In political terms, neither the Europeans nor the Japanese can afford to have an unstable Jordan," Dr. Malki said.

A European expert on the Kingdom's economy said that

"additional revenue-generating measures have not been included in the budget and this is an area where something could be done."

This is a line followed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which favours increase in the prices of fuel, electricity and water as well as some other areas.

But, the question that comes up is: How will the Jordanian society take such hikes in light of recent revelations that over one million Jordanians live under the poverty line?

Dr. Malki agrees that the Jordanians have grown accustomed to the war psychology and are used to higher cost and lowered standard of living.

But, he rejects the idea of price hikes for consumers as unrealistic. "Subsidies, however, would not bring in more than JD 50 or JD 60 million but will not really serve the purpose of meeting the expected budget deficit," he said.

Although definite year-end figures were not immediately available, Jordan's foreign exchange reserves are estimated at around \$500 million, in addition to reserves of gold and receivables worth another \$500 million.

Jordan has frozen repayment of all foreign debts in the wake of the Gulf crisis. This has helped maintain a stable state in foreign exchange reserves, but the Kingdom has to meet the payments before the IMF and World Bank would give the green signal for further rescheduling of its foreign debts.

According to Finance Minister Basel Jaradane, the actual disbursed amount of Jordan's foreign debts stood at around \$6.5 billion in December while the total stood at \$8.3 billion.

Part of the repayments of debts and interest due in 1989 and 1990 had been rescheduled with the Paris Club of creditor governments and the London Club of commercial institutions.

Official figures indicate that Jordan needs around \$500 million annually for the next several years to service its foreign debts.

"Jordan's economy has always been sensitive to trouble in the region," said Dr. Anani. "This was evidenced in 1967, the early 1970s, and during the Gulf war," he said.

But, he added, what stands out in the Jordanian approach to crises is "the zeal and stamina to confront problems are always enhanced with trouble."

Government officials fully agree with this assertion. "We have proven that we can survive economic crises," said a senior official referring to the problems Jordan faced in late 1988 and early 1989 when the country had virtually no foreign exchange and the dinar took a plunge.

Subsequently, the dinar was devalued and was stabilised at around 0.670 to the dollar in February 1990 against 0.340 in mid-1988.

Despite the economic problems, official have ruled out any further devaluation of the currency.

"At this point in time, foreign exchange reserves are relatively healthy and the value of the dinar has been stabilised," said the senior official.

"We are quite optimistic that we can confront the economic problems as long as there is no war in the region," he noted.

"I am not saying it is going to be easy," he added. "We are indeed in for very tough times, but with perseverance and vision, we are sure to ride out the situation."

Greek finance minister looks to tax evaders for more cash

ATHENS (R) — Greece plans to crack down hard on tax evasion, a national pastime so widespread that it amounts annually to about a third of gross domestic product.

Everyone does it, from corner shops and hotels to lawyers, doctors and large corporations, government officials say.

The government expects a campaign on tax evasion to bring in more than a billion dollars in new revenue in 1991, Finance Minister Ioannis Palaiokrassas told Reuters in an interview.

Palaiokrassas said the drive would be a cornerstone of the 1991 budget and a major part of his search for more cash to cover big state deficits.

"The message of the budget is tax evasion will be stopped and for the first time we have the means to stop it: Computerisation and cross-checking of tax data," Palaiokrassas said in the interview.

To help the campaign his ministry has been entering the

records for taxpayers, private and corporate, into computers, and is hiring 1,900 people to check data and fight fraud.

He estimated that cash generated by Greece's thriving black economy, all of which escapes the tax collector's net, at well over 30 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP), which was some \$55 billion in 1989.

Asked how much revenue would be raised by the tax-fraud fight, he said: "This is a figure we don't like to give because it often becomes the target of ridicule. Conservatively we put it at 250 billion drachmas (\$1.6 billion) but I think it will be much more."

Along with the determination to stop tax fraud, he said the message of the budget would be that the free-spending economic programmes during Socialist rule from 1981 to 1989 were over.

"The state cannot afford any longer to subsidise the growth of the public sector, on the con-

trary, by cutting down on subsidies and (through) the programme of privatisation we hope we shall limit the size of the public sector," he said.

State spending, much of which goes to servicing Greece's \$55 billion debt, would increase by less than 25 per cent in 1991 and revenues would rise by about 40 per cent, he said.

He forecast a 1991 budget deficit of 2.15 trillion drachmas (\$13.4 billion), compared with 2.07 trillion (\$12.9 billion) in 1990. Total debt servicing in 1991 was estimated at 2.2 trillion drachmas (\$13.7 billion).

After taking office the conservatives raised indirect taxes on petrol, cigarettes and alcohol, imposed a surtax on higher incomes and hiked the price on public utilities to help cover chronic deficits.

Echoing the cries of alarm by Greece's European Community partners, the conservatives said the deficits were crippling the economy and threatening to push the state into bankruptcy.

Japan, U.S. firms target Soviet oil

TOKYO (R) — One of Japan's three largest trading houses, C. Itob and Co., and the U.S. oil company Exxon recently agreed to conduct a joint feasibility study on developing oil and gas resources on the Soviet far east island of Sakhalin, a Tokyo business daily reported Tuesday.

The plan will be formally proposed to the Soviet government during a Soviet-Japanese economic meeting scheduled in Tokyo for late January, the Nihon Keizai Shimbun daily said.

The governmental Export-Import Bank of Japan is expected to join private sector banks in putting up an estimated one to \$1.5 billion in initial capital to back the project, according to the daily. It would be the first large-scale project in the Soviet Union to be backed by the bank.

Officials of C. Itob could not be reached for comment on the report.

Iranian oil may flow to U.S. again

HOUSTON, Texas (R) — Iranian oil, barred from the United States since 1987, could start flowing here again now Washington has eased import restrictions.

But industry officials doubt that U.S. ports are about to be jammed with tankers from the Gulf nation.

Changes in the law are limited, and U.S. refineries already have plenty of the type of high-sulphur "sour" crude produced by Iran, used mainly for industrial fuels and heating oil.

A band of oil companies were advised recently that Washington would ease a 1987 ban on trade with Iran to give Tehran money to settle claims against it at the Iran-U.S. claims tribunal in the Hague. The body was set up to adjudicate billions of dollars in claims by both sides after the 1979-80 Tehran hostages crisis.

Officially, Washington imposed the 1987 ban because Iran failed to comply with a U.N.-ordered ceasefire during the Iran-Iraq war. Diplomats said at the time that the move was designed to choke the country economically because of its avowed hostility towards the United States.

Prior to the ban, Iran was shipping about 300,000 barrels a day to the United States, most of it to refiners in the U.S. Virgin Islands.

A spokeswoman for the Office of Foreign Control, a division of the U.S. Treasury, said details governing which oil companies can apply for permission to import crude would be issued this week.

An industry source said: "It's my understanding that the change will only affect those companies which have claims against Iran, and not the entire U.S. oil industry."

According to Petroleum Intelligence Weekly, the National Iranian Oil Company has contacted several U.S. companies to see if they would accept oil as direct payment for the claims.

They include Hill Petroleum, Chevron, Mobil, Exxon and Texaco, the weekly reported. Spokesmen for many of the companies said they were still seeking information from Washington on the policy change and had no immediate plans to import from Iran.

Industry sources also said it was unlikely that former U.S. customers would rush to reestablish ties with Iran unless the country was willing to offer sizeable discounts.

Currently, supplies of high-sulphur sour crude are more than ample throughout the world, in large part because of increased output by Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, as well as Iran.

Commercial and residential property boom in Spain cools off

MADRID (R) — After five years of runaway growth, Spain's red-hot property market is finally cooling off, industry analysts say.

Among the factors that brought on the chill were a government credit squeeze from mid-1989, a halt to tax relief for second homes, a crackdown on undeclared income, the Gulf crisis and a planned 1991 revision of decades-old system of rateable property values.

"The boom years are over," said Belen Sanchez, head of research at brokers Benito Y Moojardin. "Now we'll see a sector more mature, more selective in terms of quality of supply."

Propelled by a surging economy, prices shot up — especially in Madrid and Barcelona — from the introduction of new property laws in 1985 by the then Socialist government.

Previous legislation tied property owners to tenants paying antiquated rents but the Boyer law allowed them to link new contracts to inflation and update them to market levels.

"The law sparked the boom, coinciding as it did with Spain's entry to the European Community and the end of the Socialist government's tight economic measures, so it was a fast race," said Juan Manuel Redondo of brokers Agentes de Bolsa Asociados.

"There was no satisfying demand and there was a lack of

land. Foreigners invested in property here because it was so much cheaper and that unleashed a phenomenal construction boom."

Redondo said prices had tripled or more since 1985, "so Spain, from being one of the cheapest countries in Europe, is now third or fourth dearest for prices of flats or offices."

Sanchez said the boom and the antiquated rateable values attracted a lot of "dinero negro" (undeclared income) for laundering and speculative investment, helping to inflate prices out of proportion.

"You were mixing real demand and supply with speculative demand," she said. "That helped to overhear the sector."

Although the boom is over, demand for housing and offices for rental is still strong. Unlike most EC countries, rentals remain a distant off-shoot of the Spanish market and Sanchez said new rent laws are expected this year to try to correct that.

That property sector hopes a new law will be retrospective, freeing it from pre-Boyer law rents and from even older ones protected since the 1960s which mean some tenants still pay only 300 to 500 pesetas (\$30 to \$50) per square metre a month. Office rents in central Madrid at market prices can be nearer 10 times that.

These antiquated prices are hobbling companies. The four leaders are Prima Inmobiliaria,

Metrovacesa, Vallerbermoso and Urbis, all except Prima controlled by banks and all but Prima with 66 to 88 per cent of their rents stuck at pre-Boyer levels.

On the Madrid bourse, which has taken a battering from the Gulf crisis and fallen 21 per cent in 1990, Urbis and Vallerbermoso have both underperformed the general index.

Prima, a young firm 24.9-per cent owned by the Kuwait Investment Office's Grupo Torres and with 98 per cent of its rentals post-Boyer, has fared much better.

Prima is top in terms of market capitalisation and behind Madrid's most ambitious and controversial property project, the gateway to Europe twin towers at the north end of the city's Castellana Avenue main artery.

"They will be the first purpose-built 'leaning towers' in the world," said a Prima spokeswoman. "The Tower of Pisa was an accident."

The steel and glass towers will lean towards each other at an angle of 15 degrees on either side of the Castellana, with 123,000 square metres of office and apartments.

In the midst of bearishness about the sector, Prima has also set two Spanish property records in two months, getting 5,500 pesetas (\$550) per square metre for a Madrid office and 4,500 pesetas (\$450) in Barcelona, both to foreign banks.

While residential prices stabilise and tourist properties on the coast are hard hit by falling tourist numbers, analysts see demand continuing for high-quality offices, shopping centres and industrial premises.

"There are still opportunities relating to shopping centres, in which we are much less developed than the rest of Europe," said Sanchez.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES					
Tuesday, January 1, 1991					
Central Bank official rates					
	Buy	Sell		Buy	Sell
U.S. dollar	663.0	667.0	Japanese yen (for 100)	488.8	491.7
Pound Sterling	1281.9	1285.6	Dutch guilder	393.8	396.2
Deutsche mark	444.6	447.3	Swedish crown	117.6	118.3
Swiss franc	521.7	524.8	Italian lira (for 100)	38.9	39.3
French franc	130.7	131.5	Belgian franc (for 10)	214.3	215.6

TODAY AT

Cinema **RAINBOW** Tel: 625155

Ahmad Zaki ... Raghda ... Sahar Rami

IN

CAPORIA

(Arabic)

Show: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30 p.m.

Cinema **CONCORD** Tel: 677420

POLICE ACADEMY "6"

Show: 3:30, 5:15, 6:45, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema **PHILADELPHIA** Tel: 634144

Sylvester Stallone

LOCK UP

Show: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

Cinema **NIJOM** Tel: 675571

Nadia Al Jundi, Farouq Al Fishawi & Salah Qabil

IN

TERRORISM

(Arabic)

Show: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

Friday & Sunday cinema show at 11:00 a.m.

Cinema **PLAZA** Tel: 699238

SPRING BREAK

Show: 12:30, 3:15, 5:15, 7:15, 9:45 p.m.

USED FURNITURE WANTED

We buy used furniture by pieces or one lot home furniture

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Interested, please call 650685, 685569 daily from 3-8 p.m.

SERVICE STAFF WANTED

Two Filipino ladies are wanted to work for a family house at Ankara-Turkey.

If interested contact Tel.: 646256 Mr. Hussam 8-10 A.M.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Embassy of India — Amman

All Indian nationals residing in Jordan are requested to contact the Indian embassy at First Circle Jebel Amman, Amman (P.O. Box No. 2168) on any of the working days and register their name, passport details, (number, date & Place of issue) and contact address in Jordan as well as permanent address in India.

Those unable to come personally to the embassy are requested to send above details by post at the earliest.

Employers of Indian nationals are requested to bring above announcement to the notice of their Indian employees for doing needful.

WANTED

A domestic helper is needed (Sri Lankan or Filipino) with a good salary.

For more information contact tel. 664581 from 4-8 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENT

As originally planned, the American Community School will resume all classes (K-12) after Christmas break on January 9, 1991

اعلان

ستعود مدرسة الجالية الامريكية لفتح ابوابها للفضل

الجديد بعد عطلة عيد الميلاد ورأس السنة لجميع الصفوف

اعتباراً من ١٩٩١ / ١ / ٩

Guns fall silent on New Year's Day in Sri Lanka

COLOMBO (Agencies) — Guns fell silent in Sri Lanka Tuesday as a unilateral New Year ceasefire by Tamil separatist guerrillas took effect.

"The ceasefire seems to be holding on the first day," a senior government official said. "No incidents have been reported."

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), who have fought security forces in the north and east for seven years, declared an indefinite ceasefire from midnight Monday.

The government responded cautiously, saying it would take it three days to "assess the genuineness of the declared intentions of the LTTE."

Military observers noted that although the government had not said it would stop hostilities too, its forces seemed to be holding their fire.

"The fact that there have been no clashes so far on the first day indicates that the troops seem to be attempting to play ball. It is a good sign," one military analyst said.

The Tigers said in a statement that their men would defend themselves if security forces con-

tinued to fight.

"Our forces are watchful for any surprise attack. On past experience we cannot trust the Tigers," one military officer said.

Military sources said the Tigers had broken ceasefire agreements in the past. Last June, they abandoned 14-month-old peace talks with the government and launched surprise attacks on military and police installations in the north and east.

More than 2,000 Tigers and nearly 900 men of the security forces have been killed since then, military sources said. About 680 civilians have also died.

A government spokesman said some opposition political parties, while advising the government to take precautions, appeared to support a positive response to the ceasefire.

"Their position generally seems to be that while moving cautiously, the government should respond positively to the gesture made by a group which has been waging war," he said.

The government's official response is likely to be announced

Friday, official sources said. The Tigers want to set up an independent homeland in the north and east for minority Tamils who form 13 per cent of Sri Lanka's population of 16 million.

"If the ceasefire is observed by both parties, the LTTE will be prepared to enter peace talks," the guerrillas said in a statement issued by their London office and published in Colombo newspapers.

President Ranasinghe Premadasa may make his position on the latest ceasefire offer known when he addresses the nation on the second anniversary of his taking office as president, according to government officials who spoke on condition of anonymity.

There have been at least five ceasefires since the guerrilla war started in 1983.

Tamils, who make up 18 per cent of the island's 16 million people, have long accused the Sinhalese majority of discrimination in jobs, economy and use of the Sinhala language. Sinhalese make up 75 per cent of the population.

Alia: 1991 will be turning point for Albania

VIENNA (R) — Albania's Communist President Ramiz Alia began the New Year by saying that 1991 would be a turning point in his country's move towards democracy and appeal for calm as changes took place.

"I am confident that the year 1991 will mark a turning point," Alia said in a New Year's address on state radio Tuesday morning.

The address looked back on a month of unprecedented reforms in the tiny Balkan state, including Alia's decision to allow opposition parties to exist for the first time in four decades of hardline Communist rule and let them compete in free elections in February.

"1990 will remain in our history as a year of great democratic transformations in the whole of society," Alia said. "These developments were realised more rapidly than anyone could imagine."

His decision to tolerate other parties and the foundation of the opposition Democratic Party on Dec. 12 sparked violent anti-Communist unrest in many parts of the country.

Tankes were sent to several towns to quell riots in which demonstrators looted shops, set fire to vehicles and attacked Communist buildings.

Some 2,000 Albanians, doubtful of the Communists' sincerity to reform, "voted with their feet" in December and defied armed border guards and heavy snow to flee to neighbouring Greece.

Alia's address condemned last month's unrest and warned Albanians that further disturbances would endanger reform.

The Albanian people, in working for democratisation, are showing exemplary maturity and wisdom, but there has also been a lack of democratic tolerance," he said.

"There have also been unpleasant and damaging events which disturb people, hamper economic development, and encourage division and violence."

"Such acts must be resolutely condemned, because they are blows to the democratic process."

Leaders of the Democratic Party have also appealed for calm and plan to hold a series of peaceful rallies across the country to gather support and urge the government to postpone elections due in February to give them more time to prepare.

Alia repeated that the election date would be Feb. 10 and promised that the polls would be fair.

"These elections will be completely free and democratic, pluralist and secret," he said.

Last month's changes in Albania included an easing on travel restrictions for members of the country's tiny Jewish community, barred from emigration for the past 25 years.

Israel Radio said Monday that about 350 Albanian Jews planned to emigrate to Israel during 1991 and several families had already arrived.

A group of 37 Albanian Jews arrived in the Italian port of Trieste Monday, awaiting the chance to travel on to Israel or the United States, the Italian Foreign Ministry said.

Cuba seeks to survive 1991

HAVANA (R) — Billboards defiantly proclaim "Cuba va" — Cuba can make it — but the determination of President Fidel Castro to maintain the island as a bulwark of orthodox socialism cannot hide growing economic hardship at home and political isolation abroad.

The New Year propaganda slogan in Havana projects the Communist leadership's apparently unshakable confidence. But the upbeat official tone cannot hide a mood of fearful uncertainty and grim pragmatism gripping the small Caribbean nation as it confronts growing economic hardship.

Shrugging off hostility from the United States, jolted but not moved by the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, Castro has chalked up 1990 as a victory of survival.

"Here we are, firmer than ever," the grey-bearded Castro defiantly told the National Assembly last week.

However, Castro faces growing opposition abroad. Last month the Cuban Foreign Ministry said Czechoslovakia had decided to stop representing Cuba's diplomatic interests in the United States.

Prague's embassy in Washington took on the responsibility in 1961 when the United States broke diplomatic ties with Havana.

Speaking almost 32 years to the day since the victory in 1959 of the popular revolution led against critics who had predicted the fall of his Com-

munist rule last year. But despite his characteristic fiery optimism, Castro has warned Cubans to brace for even tougher daily sacrifices as a result of the disruption of Cuba's economic lifeline to the Soviet Union, itself racked by political and economic turmoil.

The government has extended rationing to practically all food items and consumer goods, imposed stringent fuel restrictions, replaced tractors with oxen and imported bicycles instead of cars. It has also cut electricity supplies and transport and closed some factories.

While proclaiming eternal allegiance to a one-party Communist system, the ruling Communist Party has moved publicly to revitalise its political structure from within and overhaul the flagging, centrally-run sugar-based economy.

Cuts to the bloated party bureaucracy, efforts to make official bodies more answerable to the people and promises to open up party membership to religious believers are all part of a process of political reform due to culminate in a party congress scheduled for the first half of 1991.

Senior party officials predict minor changes to the country's 1976 constitution to "perfect" Cuba's socialism.

But the moves have failed to close the Gulf between official rhetoric and reality or dispel discontent among Cuba's

more than 10 million people, despite the fact that in the whole they enjoy some of the highest educational and health standards in Latin America.

Popular irritation, stronger in Havana than the provinces, is especially directed against shortages of fuel, food and other goods, widespread inefficiency and deteriorating public services.

"It's not that there's going to be hunger as such, but the quality of life will fall," one diplomat in Havana predicted.

The prospect of this discontent becoming open opposition looks remote. During 1990, the handful of clandestine dissident groups that existed then were heavily infiltrated by security agents and many of their members imprisoned, leaving only a small number of human rights monitors still active.

A nationwide campaign launched by the Interior Ministry against crime, black-market trading and corruption has netted hundreds of suspects, including police and officials.

One priority singled out by the government for 1991 is food production and hundreds of workers and officials have been sent to the fields to boost the flow of fruit and vegetables to the shops. Their scarcity is a perennial source of complaint.

Fruit and vegetable supplies did improve towards the end of the year, although the food self-sufficiency, an objective trumpeted by the government since 1959, still appears far off.

COLUMN

Indian court system exceeds its standards

NEW DELHI (AP) — India's court system has exceeded even its own snail-paced standards with a fraud trial that lasted a record 33 years and outlasted 16 witnesses who died. The verdict: Too long. A special court acquitted four men of fraud after a trial in which prosecutors spent 130 times the amount the men were accused of appropriating, newspapers said. "This trial is the biggest waste of public time and money," The Hindu newspaper quoted Judge V.B. Gupta as saying in his judgment. The case began in 1957, two years after four employees of a state-run transport company were accused of buying fake motor parts, costing the company 18,000 rupees (then \$4,500). The newspaper quoted the judge as saying the prosecution failed to prove charges during 33 years. Instead they "choose to spend" nearly 10 million rupees (now \$588,000) on the litigation, said Gupta, whose special court had charge of the case for 13 years after the supreme court transferred it there from a one-judge local court. India's judicial system is known for its slowness. Civil suits sometimes drag on for decades. All courts, including the Supreme Court, have a backlog of hundreds of cases.

Sleuths sniffing for fake perfumes find Vaporub

SINGAPORE (AP) — Investigators looking for the counterfeiters of several famous brands of perfumes found more common but no less distinctive trademark — Vicks Vaporub. Sleuths hired to track down suppliers of phony Yves Saint Laurent and Giorgio Armani discovered 10,000 fake jars of the cold remedy in a Nov. 22 raid on an illicit perfume laboratory. The find was reported to the Cincinnati headquarters of Procter and Gamble, which owns Richardson-Vicks Inc., the maker of Vaporub. It was confirmed by Procter and Gamble, marketing director Brandt Handley. The bogus Vaporub jars with Arabic words in addition to English on the label were intended for sale in the Middle East, Handley said. Valid Vaporub, made in neighbouring Malaysia, has only English and Chinese lettering for the regional market. The sale is sold in more than 100 countries and made at more than a dozen legitimate plants around the world, from its birthplace in North Carolina to factories in Mexico, India and Australia. Handley said his company's trademark had been ripped off sporadically over the past 15 years. The latest batch smelled more like Chinese medicated oil than the distinctive mix of menthol, camphor and eucalyptus oil. Responding to pressure from the United States, Singapore tightened its copyright laws in 1987.

Crumbling New York bridges pose dangers

NEW YORK (R) — New York City's bridges, rusted and creaking after decades of neglect, pose threats to life and America's economic health, officials said Friday after they closed a key link between Manhattan and Brooklyn. Inspectors have posted "red flag" hazardous warnings on the 80-year-old Manhattan Bridge over the East River and closed the bridge to train traffic. Steel plates connecting structural beams that support the bridge had slipped or broken and the city was just short of "a very serious accident," said David Steinberger, deputy commissioner for bridges. Transport Department spokesman Joe De Plasco said the closing dramatised the dire state of the city's infrastructure. "New York has the oldest modern infrastructure," said De Plasco, "and it's the only city that hasn't had to rebuild because of war or natural disaster. Many of our waterway bridges are 100 years old." Manhattan bridge carries 78,000 vehicles a day as well as four train lines — about 350,000 people per day. More than a million people and 900,000 cars pour into Manhattan daily through the city's bridges and tunnels. More than half of New York's 842 bridges need major repairs, said De Plasco. But the city's failing economy has already forced the Transport Department to cut its hiring of more bridge inspectors, he added.

21 Killed in Philippines New Year revelry

MANILA (R) — Twenty-one people were killed, many hit by stray bullets, and about 1,500 were injured as the Philippines put aside economic difficulties to welcome 1991 with firecrackers and gunfire, police said Tuesday.

They said 11 fires broke out in Manila, one of them killing three workers trapped inside a garment factory. One man was electrocuted in another fire in crowded Quiapo district, they said.

Thirteen people died of gunshot wounds in the midnight revelry in and around Manila, police said. The rest of the fatalities were stabbing victims, they said.

Firecrackers are illegal in the Philippines, but every New Year's Eve hundreds of thousands are exploded during the merrymaking, the smoke still darkening the Manila sky the next morning.

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